

POLITICAL DESTABILIZATION IN TURKEY:
THE CASE OF JOURNALISM, 1980-2013

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This research explores the making of the contemporary media in Turkey. I conducted fifteen months of fieldwork in Turkey in 2013 and 2014. During my field research I interviewed sixty-three journalists, civil society activists, state officials and legal scholars, participated at protests and civil society meetings of journalists, and collected published documents. Based on my data, I suggest that the decline in the plurality of opinions, the decline in the quality of news-making and the increase in the contentious activities of journalists in Turkey in the last decade are consequences of the destabilization in power hierarchies and journalists' interpretations of such destabilization.

In the interviews, I found that journalists commonly organized their narratives about professional practice around the notions of identity, status and emotions. They stressed that as the state's attitude towards journalists with varying political identities changed, so did journalists' status positions and their emotions. Building on these accounts, I argue that as power hierarchies among various identity groups were disturbed, journalists' interpretations of the redistribution of power motivated them to revise their professional practices. These practices constitute the news-content, movements and organizations in the contemporary media landscape.

Overall, my theoretical explanation is inductively derived from the narratives of journalists. It sets forth the concept of destabilization as an external factor that transforms social action. Moreover, it presents the role played by identity, status and emotion as mediators between the large forces that alter the conditions of existence of field actors and

the field actors' actions. Here I should note that while the dissertation stresses the role played by political, economic and cultural forces as well as identity and status in structuring the field of journalism, the novelty of the framework lies in integrating emotions, which have been unduly disregarded, with these other ways of describing and explaining in political analysis.

In an era of rising authoritarianism, this analysis allows us to recognize the significance of understanding professional practice and institutional change in their political, economic and cultural context. Although the framework proposed in this dissertation is based on data gathered on developments in Turkey before 2014, the implications of the dissertation reach beyond that date and geography. Specifically, the dissertation provides a historical perspective on the origins of institutional decay in countries transitioning to repressive regimes.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Defne Över was born in 1982, in Ankara, Turkey. She attended elementary school, highschool and college in Istanbul, Turkey, receiving her BA degree in Sociology at Boğaziçi University. She then earned an MA in Social Sciences (Sociology and Political Sciences) at Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. Before beginning her graduate studies at Cornell University, Defne also spent a semester at Duke University as part of an exchange program between Humboldt University Faculty of Social Sciences and the Political Science Department of Duke University.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA (*Anadolu Haber Ajansı*) Anadolu News Agency

ANAP (*Anavatan Partisi*) Motherland Party

AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) Justice and Development Party

BDDK (*Bankacılık Düzenleme ve Denetleme Kurulu*) The Bank Regulatory and Supervisory Agency

BDP (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*) Peace and Democracy Party

CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) Republican People's Party

ÇGD (*Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği*) Progressive Journalists Association

ÇYDD (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*) Association for Supporting Contemporary Life

DISK (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*) Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey

DMG (*Doğan Medya Grup*) Doğan Media Group

DTP (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*) Democratic Society Party

DYP (*Doğru Yol Partisi*) True Path Party

DP (*Demokrat Parti*) Democrat Party

EOI Export Oriented Industrialization

EU European Union

FP (*Fazilet Partisi*) Virtue Party

HSYK (*Hakimler Savcular Yüksek Kurulu*) High Council of Judges and Prosecutors

IFJ International Federation of Journalists

IHL (Imam Hatip Lisesi) Religious Vocational High schools

IMF International Monetary Fund

IPI International Press Institute

JITEM (*Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele*) Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organization

KCK (*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*) Kurdistan Communities Union

MGK (*Milli Güvenlik Konseyi*) National Security Council

MIT (*Milli Istihbarat Teşkilatı*) National Intelligence Organization

MUSIAD (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği*) Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association

PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kürdistan*) Kurdish Workers Party

RP (*Refah Partisi*) Welfare Party

RTÜK (*Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu*) Radio and Television Supreme Council

SHP (*Sosyal-Demokrat Halkçı Parti*) Social Democratic People's Party

SPK (*Sermaye Piyasası Kurulu*) Capital Market's Board

TGC (*Türkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyeti*) Turkish Journalists' Association

TGS (*Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası*) Turkish Journalists' Union

TGSS (*Türkiye Gazete Sahipleri Sendikası*) Union of Turkish Newspaper Owners

TIB (*Telekomünikasyon İletişim Başkanlığı*) Information and Communication Technologies Authority

TISK (*Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*) Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations

TL (Türk Lirası) Turkish Lira

TMSF (*Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu*) Savings Deposit Insurance Fund

TRT (*Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu*) Turkish Radio and Television Corporation

TTB (*Türk Ticaret Bankası*) Turkish Trade Bank

TTB (*Türk Tabipler Birliği*) Turkish Medical Association

TUSIAD (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İş Adamları Derneği*) Turkish Industrialists' and
Businessmen's Association

WB World Bank

YÖK (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu*) The Council of Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

One evening in the fall of 2013 I called a journalist in his early 40s, working for a mainstream TV station, to schedule an appointment. He was expecting my call. A fellow journalist had told him about me and my research. When he picked up his phone, I introduced myself and mentioned that I would like to talk to him about censorship and self-censorship practices in contemporary Turkish media. As he heard me say censorship, the tone of his voice changed. He became hesitant about scheduling a meeting. He said he thought I wanted to talk to him about a case of an unsolved murder of a journalist from the 1990s as he was a friend of the killed journalist. He said he was not sure if he actually wanted to talk about censorship. On the one hand, he did not want to hurt his journalist friend who had promised him as an interviewee for my project. On the other, he did not want to talk about censorship at all. Nevertheless, he decided to meet me the next day. When we met he felt the need to explain why he felt puzzled about discussing censorship:

I go to work everyday, witness the censorship going on, and practice self-censorship. I am a left-leaning journalist and so are most of my friends. Unlike me most of them work in oppositional media stations. They either don't earn much money or they don't earn any. After work or on the weekends, I usually meet them and feel ashamed for what I do here. But I have to do this. I have to pay for rent and I have two children that go to school. This is one of the few media stations that pays a salary on a regular basis. I stopped complaining about what is going on here for a while now. The moment I start talking, criticizing what is going on, I feel as if I have two personalities, that I am hypocritical in acting one way and

talking another. I don't see this as journalism anymore. But I have to keep on doing this. That's why I didn't want to talk to you. But here we are. I am listening to you.

In this brief explanation, the journalist emphasized the role of emotions in defining one's professional activities and one's attitude towards his/her profession. This emphasis on emotions was further supported by his attitude during the interview. We had our conversation over lunch at a restaurant close to his workplace. There were co-workers from his workplace at other tables and over our conversation, he kept checking if anyone was listening to us or approaching us. At times he would lower down his voice. Yet each time I asked him if he would like me to turn off the voice recorder or stop the conversation he declined and kept on talking. He also joked: "Ok, I admit that I am afraid but it's not at that level."

Fear and shame clearly were not the only emotions that defined journalists' professional worlds in Turkey by the time I conducted my fieldwork. Other interviewees addressed dignity or admiration as a motivation for professional activity. They would participate in protests to defend their professional dignity against the state or align with the government narrative on the news because of their admiration for the ruling party. While emotions varied from one journalist to another, one common thread to all narratives of emotion was the object that the emotions were directed at: political power. Journalists would fear pressure from the politically compliant media owners, struggle against the state to protect their professional dignity or feel empowered by the acts of the government. Journalists' emotions were all defined through their relationship with political power. Why would journalists refer to political power in explaining their professional practice? Why would they describe their professional activities in emotions directed at political power?

In Turkey, journalists have always worked under the dominance of the state in political and economic affairs. Since the 1980s, with the rise of concentration, conglomeration and clientelism in the media under the rule of constantly changing coalition governments, businessmen have also taken a significant role in drawing the limits of the practice of journalism. In fact, in the early 2000s, high rates of political parallelism placed Turkey in a mediocre 99th position in the World Press Freedom Index prepared by Reporters without Borders (see Figure 1). Since 2007, however, Turkey has dropped even lower, to a 154th position.

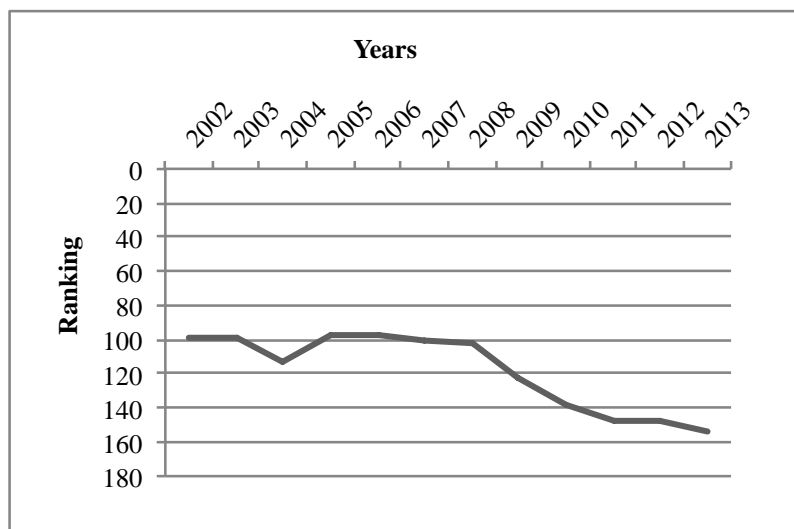


Figure 1. World Press Freedom Index
Source: Reporters Without Borders

The fall in the rankings of the World Press Freedom Index corresponded to a decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the media, a decline in the quality of news-making and an increase in journalists' contentious activities in defense of freedom of the press. We witnessed the emergence of a new group of newspapers that completely aligned their news narrative with the narrative of the government on political issues. At times, these newspapers appeared with the exact same headlines or presented fake news to support the government. These outlets were not the only ones to align their news-narrative with the narrative of the

government. Mainstream TV channels went so far as to edit live footage to de-emphasize criticisms directed at the government. Critical of such practice of journalism, journalists and journalists' associations organized protests in defense of the freedom of the press. Some journalists resigned from their workplaces and joined or established independent news platforms. There was something up in journalism. What was the source of these institutional and morphological changes in the media landscape? More importantly, how did these changes tie into journalists' emotions and the exercise of political power?

This research explores the making of the contemporary media in Turkey. It provides an explanation for the transformation that has taken place in the news-content, news-organizations and movements of journalists in the last decade. Based on sixty-three in-depth interviews that I conducted during my fifteen months of fieldwork in Turkey in 2013 and 2014, I suggest that the decline in the plurality of opinions, the decline in the quality of news-making and the increase in the contentious activities of journalists are consequences of the destabilization in power hierarchies in Turkey and journalists' interpretations of such destabilization. In the interviews, I found that journalists commonly organized their narratives about professional practice around the notions of identity, status and emotions. They stressed that as the state's attitude towards journalists with varying political identities changed, so did journalists' status positions and their emotions. Building on these accounts, I argue that as power hierarchies among various identity groups were disturbed, journalists' interpretations of the redistribution of power motivated them to revise their professional practices. These practices constitute the news-content, movements and organizations in the contemporary media landscape.

This argument draws on Bourdieu's conception of power and field, cultural sociology's understanding of social action and the power-status theories of emotions. For Bourdieu social space is made of semi-autonomous and specialized spheres of action that he calls fields. In his definition, "a field is a structured social space that contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field." (Bourdieu 1996, 40). With this definition of the field, Bourdieu notes that if one strives to understand what happens in a particular field, s/he must examine both structural and symbolic relationships that exist in that particular field. Borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu, I approach the profession of journalism as a field. I then explain the transformation in the news content, organizations and movements in the field of journalism in Turkey by focusing on the relationships among the actors of that field in the period that runs from the rise of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) to power in 2002 up to the 2013 Gezi Protests.

The Bourdieusian field theory suggests that it is the field actors that make up the institutions in a particular field in their competition with one another for maintaining or increasing their powers. Moreover, he notes that changes in the conditions of existence of field actors induce a transformation in their practices and hence in the organizational, epistemological and institutional components of that field. Against this theoretical backdrop, I treat the Turkish media landscape as a sphere of action made of professional practices of journalists such as news-making, protests in defense of freedom of the press, or establishment and management of news organizations. I then lay out the processes that

transformed journalists' conditions of existence and hence the components of the field of journalism in the last decade in Turkey.

In my explanation, I first define the major process that altered journalists' conditions of existence: destabilization of power hierarchies. Accordingly, during its rule between 2002 and 2013, the AKP, a party with a political Islamist background, has entrenched itself within the secularist state establishment and redistributed power among the political and economic actors to the advantage of its political allies. Such political, economic and cultural redistribution of power reconfigured hierarchies within the field of journalism, as well, and led to a shift in journalists' conditions of existence. The concept of "destabilization" captures the redistribution of power and its effects on practice.

When I turn to the question of how the destabilization of power hierarchies has made journalists adopt one or another form of professional practice, I borrow from cultural sociology. Cultural sociology tells us that every action, no matter how coerced it is, is embedded in a horizon of meaning and affect (Alexander 2003). This means that the variety of ways in which we perceive, think, feel and interpret the world outside of us affect the ways in which we act. Clearly, these horizons of meaning are not self-generated. They are consequences of the various processes, institutions and situations that one engages with. Power-status theories of emotions, in particular, tell us that redistribution of power, honor and material well-being affect one's emotional interpretations of the world and hence one's reactions to such redistribution (Barbalet 1998, Kemper 1990).

I argue that the process of destabilization in Turkey led to a shift in the attitude of the state towards journalists with varying political identities. This shift caused a change in journalists' status positions vis-à-vis the political authority. The experience of status shifts

generated varying emotional atmospheres for journalists with varying identities. These varying emotions then led to varying journalistic practices, which explain the decline in the quality of news-making, the decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the news as well as the increase in movements and independent organizations in the journalistic field.

Overall, my explanation is inductively derived from the narratives of journalists. It sets forth the concept of destabilization as an external factor that transforms social action. Moreover, it presents the role played by identity, status and emotion as mediators between the large forces that alter the conditions of existence of field actors and the field actors' actions. Here I should note that while the dissertation stresses the role played by political, economic and cultural forces as well as identity and status in structuring the field of journalism, the novelty of the framework lies in integrating emotions, which have been unduly disregarded, with these other ways of describing and explaining in political analysis.

In an era of rising authoritarianism, this analysis allows us to recognize the significance of understanding professional practice and institutional change in their political, economic and cultural context. Recently, political scientists have argued that the political system in Turkey has turned into a dominant party system (Çarkoğlu 2011) and that Turkey has slowly devolved from tutelary democracy into competitive authoritarianism (Esen & Gümüşçü 2016). These scholars successfully highlighted the role played in this transition by the skewing of the political playing field to the advantage of the incumbent AKP through political institutional change. However, they failed to address how such skewing is made possible by changing professional practices and how it takes place in other spheres of activity.

It is established that political power makes the group that makes itself (Bourdieu 1985), and the journalistic field occupies a particular place in this relationship in that it has the capacity to “produce and impose on the public a very particular vision of the political field” (Bourdieu 1996, 2). In the Turkish case, journalistic practices skewed the balance of information circulated in the public sphere to the advantage of the ruling party. Hence, if we are to understand the political transition in contemporary Turkey, it is imperative to understand the making of the new field of journalism in Turkey. With this objective, this study highlights the importance of understanding the political, economic and cultural embeddedness of practices and institutions that make up the field of journalism.

Although the framework proposed in this dissertation is based on data gathered on developments before 2014, the implications of the dissertation reach beyond that date. Since I concluded my fieldwork the state of journalism in Turkey has further deteriorated. Turkey continues to be the country with the highest number of journalists in jail. Fake news dominate news-content and critical journalism faces severe pressures. This dissertation provides a historical window onto the origins of this deterioration.

The argument of the study is presented in nine chapters:

Chapter One establishes the project’s theoretical base by providing a literature review and a discussion on methodology. There are three relevant literatures from which my research project derived inspirations and to which it can contribute: sociology of the media and professions, democracy and repression, and sociology of culture. In this chapter, after contextualizing the dissertation in these literatures, I lay out my theoretical framework and the methods used in research.

With *Chapter Two* I move away from the theoretical discussion and set the historical stage where power hierarchies were destabilized after 2002. Here I focus on the period between 1980 and 2002, introduce the parties of the competition over the cultural identity of state institutions, and present the prominent political and economic actors' relationship with one another and with the field of journalism. I also describe the extent to which the practice of journalism has been embedded in these political, economic and cultural relationships.

Chapter Three considers in detail the destabilization of power hierarchies in politics. Specifically, it addresses the AKP's practices and discourses that destabilized the power hierarchies among the actors introduced in the previous chapter. Here, I focus on the rise of the AKP to political power in a phase of reform between 2002 and 2007 that prepared the institutional and discursive terrain of destabilization. Next, I turn to the phase of destabilization – the period after 2007. I address the impact of structural reforms, which were prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU) in the context of the 2001 economic crisis and Turkey's candidacy to EU, the AKP's discourse of national unity, democracy and consensus-building surrounding these reforms as well as the political trials that were filed after 2007.

Chapter Four discusses the destabilization of power hierarchies in the field of journalism. Specifically, I address political trials filed against journalists, transfer of media ownerships, public defamations of journalists, and the accompanying discourse of punishment and purge of the nation's enemies as structural and symbolic sources of destabilization.

Chapter Five turns to the meaning worlds of journalists. Before specifying journalists' emotional interpretations of the destabilization in the next chapter, here I address

political identity and status changes as antecedent causes of journalists' emotional responses to the party's policies. Based on interview data, I show that journalists with varying political identities were variously affected by the destabilization in power hierarchies and that this led to various kinds of shifts in their status positions vis-à-vis the political authority.

Chapter Six then presents the narratives of emotion where journalists reveal their interpretations of the destabilization in power hierarchies in relation to their professional activities. The chapter demonstrates that emotions of disempowerment, fear, hopelessness, admiration, and empowerment were differentially distributed among journalists that experienced varying kinds of status shifts.

Chapter Seven addresses the kinds of news-making practice motivated by the emotions addressed in chapter six as well as the emotions generated by the endurance of such news-making practice. The news-making practices explored in this chapter are categorized into three groups: willing alignment with the government's news narrative, unwilling alignment with the government's news narrative (self-censorship) and critical journalism. Through studies of individual cases I demonstrate that these three forms of news-making practice that make up news-content in contemporary Turkey are embedded in the varying emotional interpretations of the destabilization.

Chapter Eight discusses contentious activities of journalists such as participation in freedom of expression movements, resignations, and establishment and management of independent news platforms. In addition to individual cases drawn from the period of 2002-2013, the chapter specifically addresses the 2013 Gezi Protests as an event that brought about various forms of contentious action as to lead to a change in the movements and organizations in the field. Here, the chapter develops the theory of activity spillout which is a

further implication of the larger framework developed in the dissertation. Accordingly, emotions generated by the endurance of unwilling submission in news-making (a repressed form of social action) lead to a shift of activity into a cognate but differently structured sphere of action. Such shift brings about the emergence, on the one hand, and the disappearance, on the other, of organizations and movements in the journalistic field.

Finally in *Chapter Nine*, I turn to my overall argument and discuss why it is important to address professional fields in the context of destabilization, how interpretations of the destabilization in long-established power relationships facilitate the rise of authoritarianism, and the implications of the proposed framework for understanding similar developments in authoritarianizing countries as well as post-2013 Turkey.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

“It is by no means true that every case of submissiveness to persons in positions of power is primarily (or even at all) oriented to [a belief in their legitimacy] ... this belief. Loyalty may be hypocritically simulated by individuals at by whole groups on purely opportunistic grounds, or carried out in practice for reasons of material self-interest. Or people may submit from individual weakness and helplessness because there is no acceptable alternative.”

Weber, 1968, I, 214.

Turkey, a parliamentary democracy, which has held multiparty elections since 1950, is a signatory of both the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 28 of the Turkish Constitution of 1982 guarantees freedom of the press and protects against censorship, while Article 26 guarantees freedom of expression. Moreover, as of 2013 the media landscape in Turkey is vibrant, with 40 national and 2,000 local newspapers, dozens of news magazines, at least 10 national news channels, 250 local TV channels, 2,000 radio

outlets, hundreds of news websites and over 60 journalists' associations¹ (Yeşil 2014). These indicate that expressions of non-violent opinion are legally safeguarded in Turkey by both constitutional and international clauses and that Turkey has a pluralistic media market where high numbers of news organizations compete with one another. However, neither the legal guarantees nor a free media market amount to freedom from repression in the media in Turkey.

In contrast, Turkey has become the world leader in jailed journalists in 2012 and 2013, outpacing Iran and China (CPJ 2012, CPJ 2013). Similarly, country rankings in freedom of the press of the Reporters without Borders (see Figure 1 on page 3) suggest that in the Turkish case repression drastically increased after 2007. How do we explain the growth of a repressed media behind a liberal democratic façade? To what extent do state actors tolerate or encourage private media? How do they manage critical expression? How did their ways of tolerating and managing critical expression has changed over time? How do journalists, newspapers, newspaper owners or newspaper associations respond to these methods of government? How have their responses to changing methods of government shifted over time? This study, which explores the decline in the plurality of the opinions presented in the media, the decline in the quality of the news, and the increase in the movements in defense of freedom of expression in contemporary media landscape in Turkey,

¹ Among European countries, Turkey has a relatively low newspaper circulation of 96 newspapers bought daily per 1,000 population. Advertising revenue in the media, most of which is accrued to television, was about \$2.5 billion in 2011. In 2013, PricewaterhouseCoopers projected the sector's value at \$11.6 billion, with estimated 11.4 percent annual growth between 2013 and 2017, more than double the global average (Hürriyet Daily News 2013).

draws on the sociology of media and professions, democracy and repression, and cultural sociology literatures to answer these questions.

Journalism as a Professional Field

The media as a professional setting has been a focus of research since its emergence in the modern age. Weber was one of the early scholars who suggested that the press was an important enough social force to warrant its own sub-field of sociological study (Weber 1976). He defined the task of the researcher as examining interrelationships among individual journalists, news organizations, politics, the business world, and the numerous other interest groups who influence and who are influenced by the public. He was interested in the historically and geographically specific nature of these relationships, how they affected the opinions presented in the press and how the press contributed to the making of the modern man².

The questions raised by Weber have since been looked into by studies focusing on reception and production of the news (Schudson 2011, Ginsburg et. al 2002). Early attempts to study reception of the news were a reflection of the interest in the study of war, fascism and propaganda during and after World War II. In these studies, the emphasis was on the characteristics and behavior of the mass audience to which propaganda was disseminated

² Other writings of Weber on the press include the following: Weber, Max. [1909] 1998. "Preliminary Report on a Proposed Survey for a Sociology of the Press" *History of the Human Sciences* 11, 2:111-20; Weber, Max. [1910] 2005. "Business Report followed by The Comparative Sociology of Newspapers and Associations" Pp. 74-93 in Christopher Adair-Toteff, *Sociological Beginnings: The First Conference of the German Sociological Society*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Weber, Max. 1968. "Politics as a Vocation". See also Vol. 13, No. 2, July 2013 of *Max Weber Studies*, which is devoted to the theme of Weber and the press; and Hanno Hardt, "The Conscience of Society: Max Weber on Journalism and Responsibility", pp. 127-41 in *Social Theories of the Press* (2001).

(Adorno 1950). During the 1950s mass society theories were, however, challenged by the Chicago/Columbia model of public opinion formation which posited that strategic communication was only effective if a common cultural framework was shared by the audience (Wirth 1948, Park 1972) and if people integrated the information they got from the media with the information they got from their social networks (Larsen & Hill 1954, Friedson 1953, Katz & Lazarsfeld 1955). Over the 1970s organizational studies of the newsroom dominated the field. They were mostly unconcerned with reception, public opinion formation, the public sphere, or other public aspects of media. These topics became a focus of research once again beginning with the 1990s. Habermas' work (1989) stimulated empirical research into the structural features and communicative processes that shaped "actually existing public spheres" (Calhoun 1992), demonstrating for instance how media discourse shapes collective action (Gamson 1988) and public opinion (Gamson & Modigliani 1989).

Like the early studies on the reception of the news, early studies on the production of the news became popular during and after the World War II. Scholars explored how political actors used the media to represent an issue in such a way that the debate would proceed in a manner that was likely to favor their desired position (Lee 1952). Later on, studies on the production of the news focused on the formation of media discourse, and addressed it in reference to the political (Gitlin 1980), economic (Hallin 2008), organizational (Gans 1979, Sigelman 1973) and cultural (Alexander & Jacobs 1998, Jacobs 2005) contexts in which news-making practice was embedded. Bourdieu (1993, 1996, 1998), the news institutionalists (Cook 1998, Sparrow 1999), and the strategic action field scholars (Fligstein & McAdam 2012), in particular, approached journalism as a "field" that has its own "rules of the game"

and functions as a political institution. They explored how variations in field properties and the interaction of field rules with cultural, political and economic sources of power affect the practice of journalism (Benson 1999).

My research exploring the making of the contemporary media in Turkey joins the literature that focuses on the production of the news. Weber (1976) noted that “we cannot be satisfied with the examination of the product at hand, ... we must respect its producer and ask about the fate and the situation of journalism as a profession.” With a similar perspective, I examine the context in which journalists’ professional practices are embedded. My approach to the media resembles Bourdieusian³ (Schinkel & Noordegraaf 2011), institutional⁴ (DiMaggio 1991, Muzio, Brock & Suddaby 2013) and ecological theories⁵ (Abbott 1988, Abbott 2005) of professions in that it aims to relate organizations and actions in a particular professional domain to the broader regulatory frameworks, institutions and social forces around them.

Specifically, consistent with the Bourdieusian field theory, I treat journalism as a field that involves the creation and communication of the news. Bourdieu noted that the field of journalism occupies an ambiguous position in the larger field of power. It has the power to

³ Bourdieusian studies address particular professions as fields and explore the entire relational domain of expertise, legitimacy, personal and organizational networks, hierarchical relationships, distribution of material resources and institutional logics that make up this field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

⁴ Institutional theorists view pressures exerted by political, normative, cultural and market institutions as main shapers of organizational practices and strategies. Approaching particular professions also as organizational fields, they explore how professional fields are constructed and change over time (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

⁵ Ecological theories of professions characterize a profession as an ecology with a set of actors, locations and the relations it involves between these. In this view, various ecologies come into contact, such as professional and political ecologies, and make up a system of linked ecologies (Abbott 1988, Abbott 2005).

produce an effect of its own but is itself produced in the interaction of its own rules with the cultural, political and economic sources of power (Benson 1999). Against this backdrop, I explore how the broader forces of politics, economics and culture have transformed the field of journalism in Turkey as to transform it into a more repressed sphere of professional activity.

Taking Bourdieu's field approach, journalists and their practices as professionals are key to the constitution of the field of journalism. To understand the transformation in the field, we need to empirically understand the making as well as the effect of journalists' practices. News-making is one form of professional practice. Research has shown that professional practices undertaken at professional associations or at informal "communities of practice" contribute to the making of the boundaries of an occupation's body of knowledge (Covaleski et. al 2003, Fogarty et. al 2006, Adler et. al 2008). This means that journalists' practices at professional associations are also among their professional practices. Moreover, journalists also make up the organizations and movements in the field of journalism. For instance, we know that a rapid influx of new journalists into the field can serve as a force for transformation, or at the managerial or organizational level, new journalists establish themselves by founding a new kind of press outlet or adopting a distinctive editorial voice (Benson 1999). Hence, journalists' practices that constitute an organization or a movement in the field are also part of their professional practices. In this context, my analysis focuses on the professional practices of journalists that contribute to news-making as well as to the constitution or contestation of institutional and organizational bodies in the field.

In addition, field theory tells us that changes in the conditions of existence of the field actors will tend to induce, directly or indirectly, a transformation of the field of production

and hence of the product of field actors' practices (Bourdieu 1984). Moreover, according to field theory these changes can be set in motion with changes in related fields such as politics or the economy. Morphological changes within a field, in particular, are made possible by external factors such as "political breaks" or technological, economic, or demographic changes (Bourdieu 1993). In my analysis, I therefore explore the processes that affect journalists' conditions of existence in their professional environment and hence their professional practices. These processes include changes not only in the relationships in the space of journalism such as workplace relationships, collegial friendships, memberships in professional associations, and participation in work related protests but also those in the larger space of journalism such as the relationships of journalists with political and economic actors.

As explained earlier in the introduction section, in the last decade, the Turkish field of journalism experienced a decline in the plurality of opinions (a transformation in news-making practices), an increase in the number of independent news organizations (a morphological change in the organizational structure), and high levels of protest participation by journalists (a morphological change in the movements in the journalistic field). Building on field theory, I specifically aim for an explanation of how breaks in politics, economics and culture take hold in the social relationships of journalists and transform their conditions of existence so as to make them undertake a particular form of professional practice.

Overall, this study operates on three levels of understanding: first, how the political, economic and cultural forces shape journalists' professional relationships and their conditions of existence; second, how these journalists' interpretations of this change transform their professional practices; and third, how these practices make up the field of

journalism in Turkey. In my analysis, as a Weberian approach would encourage, I avoid preestablished assumptions about the nature of the relationship between the media and broader political, economic and cultural forces, and explore these forces in their specific social-historical context in Turkey. Generally, models in the sociology of news have tended to either aggregate societal level influences that are analytically and often empirically quite distinct or overemphasize micro-level interpretations (Benson 2004). My approach that builds on field theory enables the understanding of how the macro and the micro interact to shape news-content, organizations and movements in the field of journalism.

Macro Forces shaping the Field of Journalism: State, Market and Culture

In the second half of the 20th century, this field has been studied primarily in relation to three macro social forces, namely economy, state and culture. These studies generally approached the state of the field of journalism in terms of freedom of the press, a political right that is a fundamental component of democracy, and viewed journalism as an essential element in promoting the development of a deliberative public sphere (Starr 2004, Thompson 1995). They explored whether and how markets, media ownership and commercialization, on the one hand, and political institutions and cultural frameworks, on the other, affect the democratic promise of public communication.

A subgroup of the scholars who focused their attention on the economy assumes that proper functioning of democracy is made possible by economic liberalization. Accordingly, a free market serves as a check to the centralization of political power by providing a means for information exchange (Hayek 1988) and by coordinating free actions to derive effectiveness from diversity (Friedman 1962). In these accounts, a free press is ensured by

private ownership of news organizations and competition among these organizations in a free market economy. They argue that the existence of more media outlets competing directly in the same media market increases the topical and ideological diversity of the news (Bagdikian 1992). In some cases, even concentration and monopolization encourage more in-depth political reporting because large, profitable media companies have more resources to devote to reporting, and this makes them potentially more willing and able to challenge the state, powerful interest groups, or other large corporations (Coulson & Lacy 1996, Baker 2002). In this vein, liberal theories of the media hold that media in non-democratic regimes benefits from market liberalization to become more free and deliberative (Rawnsley & Rawnsley 1998, Lawson 2002). This proposition brings these scholars into conversation with the scholars who study the state of the field of journalism in relation to the structure of the state.

Scholars who focus on the role of the state generally emphasize regime type and form of government in explaining the state of journalism (Neuman 1991, Whitten-Woording 2009). Following those who argue that democratic institutions provide the means to include the aggrieved in the political process, to give them symbolic representation and to punish the violators of human rights (Dahl 1989, Potter et al. 1997) they hold that the presence of legal and institutional guarantees for democratic process are key in preventing repression of journalism. In these accounts, public criticism is easier in democratic political systems than in authoritarian systems, and forms of state intervention associated with varying forms of government lead to varying levels of press freedom. Scholars therefore categorize acts of state intervention into media into direct censorship, occasional interventions by officials, legal regulation, enabling of media existence by financial aid, and being the primary definer of the issues and ideas on the media agenda (Curran 1991, Kuhn 1995), and associate these

with regime type. In the conversation with the liberal theories of the media, these scholars emphasize regime type over media ownership in terms of its influence on the journalistic field. For instance, focusing on the Franco regime, the transition to democracy and restoration of democracy in Spain, DeMateo (1989) has shown that media organizations' control over the news product varies with dependence on the state and not with type of ownership.

A more nuanced strand of research, however, challenges both of these perspectives. Relying on studies which reveal that repression is possible in the presence of both liberal markets and proper democratic institutions (Davenport 2012) this strand of research asserts that pressures on the media prevail in both democratic and free market societies, that the state of freedom of the press also varies among democratic societies and that restoration of democratic institutions in transition societies does not necessarily bring about greater freedom of the press.

Political economy and hegemony perspectives on the media, in particular, focus on countries with both democratic institutions and a free market. They assert that ownership of the media by major corporations, commercialization of the public function of the media, and the consequential absorption of professional practice into the world of consumption as a vehicle for advertising and entertainment, on the one hand, and of ideology, on the other (Gitlin 1980, Hallin 2008) lead to restriction of the capacity of profit-oriented media to challenge social and political status quo, narrower ideological debate and reinforcement of the views of political elites (Herman & Chomsky 1988, Bagdikian 1992, McChesney 2008). They assert that democratic institutions and a free market do not guarantee freedom from

repression because in such cases self-censorship rather than heavy-handed party control turns into the mechanism for repression (Germano & Meier 2013).

Cultural and comparative research on liberal democratic societies points out that the level of conflicts of interest among political elites and variance in laws, legal/cultural traditions and meaning structures such as binary codes, narratives, or scripts leads to variation in the state of press freedom (Schudson 2002) and the news discourse (Alexander & Jacobs 1998, Jacobs 2005). For instance, restrictive defamation and libel laws contribute to less public discussion of the private lives of government or other officials (Saguy 2003); or when compared to European democracies, the First Amendment tradition in America inhibits government intervention; or coverage of the sexual behavior of politicians and celebrities barely exists in Germany because German civil law gives much greater protection to privacy than Anglo-American law (Esser 1999); the prevailing framework of the nation-state shapes the professional practices of journalists (Boyer 2005).

Finally, focusing on democratizing contexts, for instance to post-1980 Latin America, scholars also argue that neither a liberal market nor democratic institutions are sufficient for press freedom in countries where media owners exalt liberalism but ceaselessly court states, support military interventions, and only criticize government intrusion that affect their own political and economic interests (Waisbord 2000). Studies on authoritarian regimes also assert that governments often blend commercial and propagandistic objectives in state-controlled media (Zhao 1998), and marketization of the media may in fact feed into authoritarianism (Stockmann 2013).

Overall, while scholars who adopt a more nuanced approach acknowledge economy, state and culture as macro social forces influencing the state of journalism, they call for

attention to historically and geographically distinct ways in which these macro forces effect the field in each particular case. Much of existing research on the Turkish field of journalism also took this third path and aimed to explain how the state structure, the prevailing economic model and the cultural framework of nationalism affected the field. In particular, they underscored the restrictive measures of the penal code protecting national identity, the anti-terror law, concentration of media ownership, and the instrumentalization of the media by media owners for their political and economic gains (Yeşil 2014, C. Christensen 2007, M. Christensen 2010, Kaya & Çakmur 2010, Tılıç 1998, Tunç 2004, Saka 2009).

These studies were successful in identifying state, economy and nationalism related macro processes that affected the content of the news or the structure of the media especially after the mid 1990s. In fact, in my exploration of the Turkish field of journalism I also consider these state, economy and culture related processes in terms of their effects on the field of journalism. However, I also contend that while these studies point at the impact of the state, the economy and the culture on the field, they do not tell us about the ways in which these forces shape the news content as well as the organizations and movements in the field. In other words, they do not present us with a theory of how the macro ties into the practices of journalists that actually make up the field of journalism. Building on existing research on Turkish media and the field approach, in my argument I explore the changes in politics, economy and culture in terms of their effects on the practice of journalism. To this end, under the guidance of cultural sociology, I take the analysis a step further and present a framework for how the macro breaks can be tied to micro level practices of journalists.

Micro Forces shaping the Practice of Journalism: Identity, Status and Emotions

In Geertz's (2000) reading of Weber, the explanation of social action involves the interpretation of the meanings that construe experience and motivate individuals to act (Alexander & Reed 2009). Building on this insight, from a cultural sociology perspective one's submission to authority or one's act of criticism, of speaking truth to power in a context of oppression is not automatically determined by that person's position in the social structure. Instead, "every action, no matter how instrumental, reflexive or coerced vis-à-vis its external environments, is to some extent embedded in a horizon of affect and meaning" (Alexander 2003).

This means that the various macro forces, institutions, and situations that one engages with generate various horizons of affect and meaning for social action. This variety of ways in which we perceive, think, feel and interpret the world outside of us affects the ways in which we act. In this context, cultural sociology seeks to understand the macro forces, institutions and situations that generate varying meaning worlds for social actors, and how cultural elements that make up these meaning worlds (e.g. discourses, emotions, rituals, identities) mediate the effects of these processes, institutions and situations on social action. This study adopts a cultural approach in that it seeks to understand the formation of journalists' practices as an effect of the breaks in politics, economics and culture.

Cultural sociologists consider emotions to be as a significant component of our cultural environment. Emotions constitute one of the ways in which we interpret (Nussbaum 2001) or understand (Glaeser 2011) the world, and in this fashion a motivational basis for our actions⁶. Our behaviors are shaped in by our rational calculations, ideas, beliefs and cognition

⁶ Common sense thinking as well as the rationalists in social science often force us to think of emotions as the opposite of rationality (Emirbayer & Goldberg 2005). This distinction is

as much as by our emotional evaluations of the conditions we endure (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta 2001, Barker 2001, O'Hearn 2009, Reed & Foran 2002)⁷. Glaeser (2011) gives the example of how the discursive understanding of classes finds an emotional counterpart in the actual hatred of people who are considered to be members of the opposing class and the loving solidarity for members of one's own class.

Emotions are located inside individuals. We look for their roots in biographical experience or in biochemical reactions in the brains. However, this does not mean to say that emotions are self-generated. They are produced and organized in interpersonal relationships, and are therefore qualities of transpersonal ties, bonds or relationships (Barker 2001). This means that emotions can change as a result of outside factors that shape the relationships of individuals. For instance, with regard to how macro economic forces affect social action in work settings and professional fields, early scholars suggested that the division of labor fosters positive feelings of belonging and solidarity within occupational groups (Durkheim, 2014[1884]), that commodity production engenders negative feelings of anger and alienation among wage earners (Marx 1972) and that rationalization would drain employment of meaning, causing human feelings to disappear from work (Weber 2009). We also know that in politics consultants apply the methods of social science to manipulate the motions of political actors (Massey 2002). Similarly, Berezin (1997, 2002), in her work on fascist Italy, shows that anti-liberal nation-states use public political rituals to create a destabilization in

also to be found in Durkheim's (2001 [1912]) suggestion that social life alternates between periods of collective effervescence and long stretches of ordinary, mundane, and routinized time, as well as in Weber's (1978) consideration of the affective and habituated forms of action as at the margins of meaningful (Glaeser 2011).

⁷ For instance, in protest events triggered by moral outrage shown in the face of human rights abuses, protesting as a form of social action, is both a rational and an emotional response given to injustice (Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta 2001).

the hierarchies of felt identity. Overall, these studies highlight that changes in political, cultural and economic relationships transform the emotions of individuals.

However, similar changes in economic, political and cultural relationships do not create the same emotional response among all members of a given population. In other words, the relationship between macro changes and emotions is mediated by other factors. For Bourdieu (1984), emotions are given shape and direction by systems of enduring dispositions (cognitive but also affectual) which he terms “habitus”. For Kemper (1978) emotional manifestations are a function of the social structural conditions that effect individuals in social situations.” For others, one’s values, status position and identity shape the way the information on change is emotionally perceived and the degree of importance placed upon responding to the situation (Barbalet 1998, Harre 1986, Jasper 1998, Kemper 1990). Hence, emotional reactions must themselves be seen as the result of an interactive process of information, status position, organizational and relational ties, and identity (Duncombe and Marsden 1993; Ellis 1991; Hochschild 1983).

Building on such understanding of social action, in my exploration of the Turkish field of journalism I explain the forms of practice that make up the field on the basis of a macro level break in politics, economics and culture that transforms the status positions and emotions of journalists that possess varying political identities. Below I present this model.

A Theory of Destabilization: the Making of the Field of Journalism

It is the journalists that prepare, frame or cover the content that we come to read or watch as the news. Similarly, it is the journalists that participate in protests or establish independent news platforms. When we talk of a decline in plurality of opinions, a decline in

the quality of news-making or of an increase in the number of protests and independent news platforms, we talk of the consequences of journalists' actions. With the framework proposed in this dissertation I explain how macro forces external to the field of journalism have transformed journalists' conditions of existence, their professional practices, and hence the versions of the reality presented in the news as well as the organizations and movements in the media field (See Figure 2.).

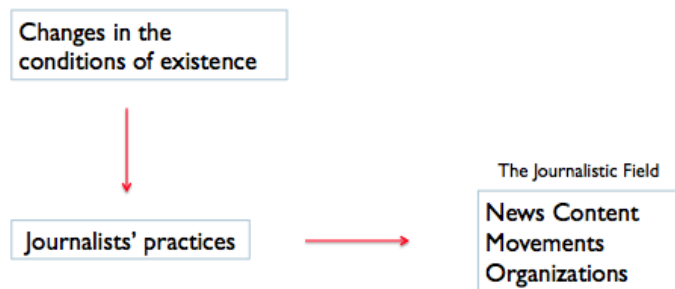


Figure 2. Conditions, Practices and the Field

Specifically I ask “what are the macro forces that alter journalists’ conditions of existence?” and “how do these forces make journalists adopt one or another form of practice of journalism?” Starting with the latter question, based on my interview data, I argue that the micro forces of identity, status and emotions bring about various forms of practice. For instance, an apolitical journalist working in the mainstream media experiences status loss vis-à-vis the political authority. Due to such loss s/he fears being fired on political grounds and unwillingly submits to the news narrative imposed onto him/her. The same journalist that feels uncertain about the limits of submission, at times goes further in self-censorship than what is expected of him or her by the authorities. The same journalist that sees no hopes in transforming the system continues to practice self-censorship.

In the next step of my argument, I ask what are the macro processes that evoked the status shifts and emotions addressed in the interviews? Again, based on the narratives of my

interviewees who related the transformation in their status positions and emotions to the transformation going on in power relationships, I define the external macro process that induces change in journalists' conditions of existence as "the destabilization of power hierarchies."

Destabilization is not an uncommonly used concept. It is a term that can often be found in the vocabulary of sociology but it has not yet been elevated to the status of a concept. Atteslander (1995) addresses it in relation to anomie, a state of normlessness and social disorganization whose outcome is unclear. He notes that anomie leads to crisis-laden insecurity in the population, and structures affected by anomie harbor the germ of destabilization. Wacquant (2008), on the other hand, refers to the destabilization of ethno-racial hierarchies in his explanation of the growth of the penal state in the US after the mid 1970s. In his usage the link between destabilization and production of feelings of insecurity is highlighted, and destabilization is differentiated from the narrow rubric of repression as a category of production where new state agencies, social types, knowledges and experts are spawned. Nevertheless, a proper definition of the concept is not provided by either one these scholars.

In my explanatory framework, building on these scholars' emphases on the links between emotions and destabilization, destabilization and social change, and destabilization and production of organizations, knowledges, and social types, I propose to use destabilization as a general concept. Accordingly, it is a state in which a stable form of inequality (social structure) has not yet disintegrated but is about to change into a new type of inequality.

Power-status theories of emotions tell us that within social situations, actors possess relative power (authority) and status (conceptualized as prestige or honor rather than as a position in a structure). As actors gain and lose power or status in changing social relationships, emotions (positive or negative such as hope and fear) emerge from these changing relationships (Kemper 1978, 1990, Thamm 2004, Turner and Stets 2005). Here, power is not understood as a substance or a possession to be seized but rather as an outgrowth or the effect of relative positions that actors occupy within one or more networks. In other words, it is an ability to compel others to follow one's wishes and directives. Status, on the other hand, relates to the giving and receiving of forced deference, honor and respect. Finally, while power-status theories generally grasped a social situation as a personal interaction, a social situation may also refer to a group interaction such as one between two or more political identity groups.

Understood this way, the transition of moving from one set of certain conditions in a social situation and to another is a social change process. This involves moving from old stability to instability, and then to a new stability; from certainty to uncertainty and to certainty again. This transition is the essence of social change and emotion processes. As social change takes place and conditions of individuals are altered, the emotion categories of actors are impacted. In particular, as power attributes of actors are reversed, anxiety emotions emerge. When individuals gain power and status they experience positive emotions such as satisfaction, security and confidence. Conversely, when they lose power or status in a situation, they experience negative emotions such as an anxiety, fear, and loss of confidence (Kemper 1978, 1990, Thamm 2004, Turner & Stets 2005).

As a stage of social change, destabilization denotes the move from stability to instability, and differs from repression in that it not only oppresses existing institutions, practices and knowledge but also spawns new ones. It transforms the conditions of existence for members of the disturbed social structure as to evoke positive or negative feelings in them. Specifically in the case of journalism, “the destabilization of power hierarchies” alters the conditions of professionals in such a way that professionals of various identities experience varying status shifts (status loss, status gain, stability) and therefore develop varying emotions (positive or negative) and varying professional practices (submission or criticism). (See Figure 3. For an outline of my entire argument.)

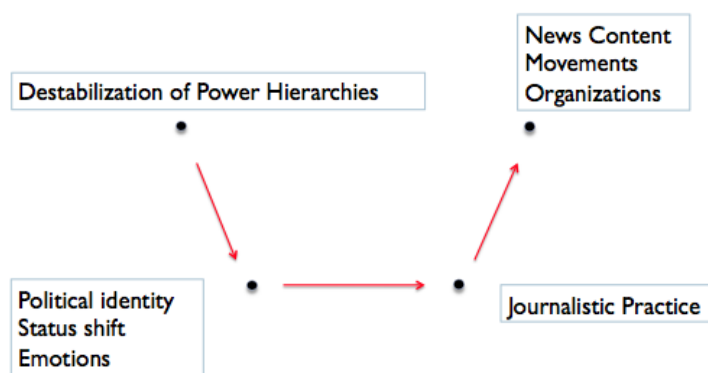


Figure 3. The Making of the Turkish Field of Journalism

Note: This diagram is prepared in the image of the famous “Coleman’s boat” (Coleman 1990). It highlights the relationships between “macro” and “micro”. Macro is at the top and micro is at the bottom. The arrows indicate pathways of causal influence.

Weber (1968) observed that people submit to power not only because of their belief in the legitimacy of power holders but also on opportunistic grounds and from individual weakness and helplessness in lack of acceptable alternatives. Along with this observation I demonstrate that journalists’ professional practices that changed in effect of the destabilization of power hierarchies over the 2000s eased their submission to new power holders, thereby deteriorating some of the existing institutions in journalism while at the same time spawning new organizations and movements. The institutional decay as well as

the increase in contention present the growth of a repressed media in Turkey. Overall, this argument addresses macro social forces that transform journalists' conditions of existence as well as the micro forces that mediate the effects of macro social forces on the practice of journalism.

Methodology

This project examines the making of the field of journalism through qualitative research methods. I look at political and economic actors exploring how their relationships with one another as well as the actors of the field of journalism have changed over time. In addition, I inquire into the meaning worlds of journalists and explore how their identities, status and emotions shape their professional practices. The project relies on 63 semi-structured interviews with journalists, lawyers, state officials and civil society actors, participant observation at protests and civil society meetings of journalists, and published sources of memoirs, columns and news.

In this research, I take an inductive theory-building approach. My interviewees do not represent all journalists in the field. Instead, I use the data generated from my interviews for theory construction. In fact, the elements of my argument, namely destabilization, identity, status and emotions, appeared in the journalists' narratives over and over again, and that is how I came to theorize the making of the field of journalism in reference to them.

Data Collection

In semi-structured interviews interviewees use personalized narratives to describe their own experiences. Through semi-structured interviews the researcher can capture the meanings individuals attach to their actions. Interviews thus allow for a contextual

understanding of action, and are ideal for studying the ways in which journalists understand and relate to the actors of the state and business as well as the organizations and other journalists in the journalistic field.

The interviews that I conducted were spread out over a fifteen-month period between April 2013 and August 2014. They were all conducted in person. Earlier pilot interviews were conducted in the summer of 2012 and January 2013. During my fieldwork I stayed in Istanbul and traveled to Ankara three times to interview journalists, civil society actors and state officials working in that city. I suggested to my interviewees that we meet at a café or their workplace of the interviewee depending on the convenience of the participant. I interviewed more than half of my interviewees in cafés or restaurants. Others were interviewed in their workplaces.

In recruiting my interviewees I used snowball sampling. I paid particular attention to the heterogeneity of the sample in three respects, namely professional status, gender and age. I wanted journalists of all professional positions such as reporters, editors, chief editors, columnists, shareholders of media outlets to be represented in my sample. My sample includes all these professional ranks. In addition, the sample includes 46 accounts from men and 16 accounts from women, and the ages of my interviewees range between 25 and 86. Finally, I also paid specific attention to giving voice to as many media outlets as possible (See Appendix 1. for a complete list of my interviewees, for the age distribution of my interviewees and for a list of the news-organizations where my interviewees have worked between 1980-2013).

In my interviews, I asked my interviewees about their professional biographies, their experiences of censorship and self-censorship, and solidarity in the profession. I asked

whether they were members of professional organizations or unions, and why or why not. I also wanted them to elaborate on what has changed in their professional lives over different periods of political crisis in Turkey, and their understandings of journalism vis-a-vis politics. Given that it is also essential to examine who is entering the journalistic field, who is leaving the field and how journalists move from one organization to another within the field I inquired into their decisions to quit, endure and change jobs, as well.

I audio-recorded all interviews except for the interviews conducted with the members of the judiciary and transcribed them later. Judges did not allow me to record their interviews. They noted that recording their interviews would put me in a risky position. In processing data, I used both hand coding and the qualitative data software NVivo. NVivo was particularly useful in the thematic analysis of the interviews, where I judged which themes were most relevant.

In addition to the interviews, I also relied on published materials as a source for journalists' narratives. These published materials included publicly available interviews conducted with journalists by other journalists, memoirs by journalists as well as columns and news that appeared in the following newspapers: *Zaman*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Star*, *Yeniakit*, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Radikal*, *Özgür Gündem*, *DIHA*, *Birgün*, *Bianet*, *T24* and *Diken*.

Finally, during my fieldwork I also attended a number of protests and civil society meetings in defense of the freedom of the press. In particular, I participated in some of the protest events organized by *Freedom for Journalists Platform* (GOP), *Platform for Solidarity with Imprisoned Journalists* (TGPD), and *Freedom of the Press Committee*, which often act in coordination in support of jailed journalists. I also attended journalists' protest during the

2013 Gezi Protests and three meetings that were organized in the course of Gezi Protests to discuss the problems in journalism. Finally, I participated in a civil society workshop on freedom of the press organized by the *Initiative for Freedom of Expression – Turkey*.

Limitations

As a researcher who is a native of Turkey and has previous research experience on Turkey, I began my fieldwork with an existing understanding of the institutions, organizations and actors that make up the field of journalism in Turkey. My Turkish as well as my existing networks among journalists eased the process of recruiting interviewees for my project. However, I should also note that use of snowball sampling method and interviews in data collection as well as the level of contemporary state repression exerted some limitation to the kind of data collected for the study.

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Given that sample members are not selected from a sampling frame, snowball samples are subject to some biases. In particular, the fact that researchers use a small pool of initial informants to reach other participants puts the sample in risk of being skewed towards the identity of initial informants. In my case, the sample risked being biased towards the cultural and political identity of my initial informants. To overcome this limitation, I chose a variety of initial informants who had varying cultural and political identities. They worked at news-outlets which were in ideological antagonism and varied in economic strength. Moreover, along with my goal of heterogeneity in age and rank distribution I also aimed at reaching respondents with varying ages and positions.

Data gathering possibilities open to interview methods also exerted some limitations on the evidence used in this study and specifically on the evidence used to support my argument on emotions. I am aware that feeling an emotion is very different from symbolizing it. Moreover, emotions are expressed not only in narrative form but also in bodily gestures. The interview method does not really allow for differentiating between physical and cognitive emotional evaluations of repression. For instance, in the case of journalists' evaluations of repression as a source of fear I could not gather evidence on journalists' physical reactions of fear since interviews do not allow for observing journalists for long periods of time and at the exact time when events that trigger fear happen. Therefore, I relied on journalists' retrospective narratives of such moments. This study hence addresses journalists' emotional understandings of their profession mostly in narrative form and treats them as subjective interpretations of their experiences. In doing this, along with historians of emotion I subscribe to the idea that an emotion statement is "an effort by the speaker to offer an interpretation of something that is observable to no other actor" (Reddy 1997, 331).

Finally, this study's limitation also owes itself in part to the level of state repression in contemporary Turkey and the sensitivity of the research subject. Journalists, closely affiliated with the government point of view were often reluctant to give an interview to me. Although they never explicitly mentioned my identity or the level of repression as a reason for declining to give an interview, the pattern in the identity of the research subjects that refused to talk to me makes me suspect that either the kinds of connections that I used to reach them did not suffice to convince them that their position would not be endangered by giving an interview or they were hostile to my project.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF A PROFESSIONAL FIELD: JOURNALISM IN TURKEY, 1980-2002

Even though the period between 2002 and 2013 is the main focus of this study, some background information on Turkish politics, economy, culture and the profession of journalism is needed to understand the destabilization of power hierarchies that took place after 2002. This chapter therefore presents the history of journalism between 1980 and 2002 in relation to political, economic and cultural forces prevailing in Turkey in this period.

Wimmer (1997, 2002) notes that for many latecomer countries with varying degrees of state capacity, on the one hand, and of ethnic and religious diversity, on the other, there remains an on-going competition for the ownership and identity of state institutions. In Turkey, the two parties of such competition have historically been the secularists and Islamists (Mardin 1973). In its foundational period, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed secular by its modernist founders, celebrating its European identity as well as the ancient history of pre-Islamic Turks. In this context, symbols of Islam were played down in narratives of the cultural identity of the nation-state.

Playing down Islam nevertheless did not mean the removal of its representations from politics and the public sphere. On the contrary, Islam and its symbols played a major role in the formation of right-wing politics and made their presence felt in the political field through conservative center-right and Islamist movements, news outlets, civil society organizations

and political parties. These organizations addressed Islam, in particular Sunni Islam⁸, as a central value of the nation whose will they claimed to represent against the top-down modernization projects of what they called the secular state elites.

State institutions such as the military, the judiciary and the civil bureaucracy tolerated such publications, movements and parties to the extent that they were not considered a threat against the secular regime. Otherwise, acting as the guardians of the secular regime, they intervened in the political process. The military, for instance, asserted its role as the guardian of the regime for the first time through a coup d'état against the conservative right-wing Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) government in 1960, and later with two other coups in 1971 and 1980. Party dissolutions constituted another means of intervention in the political process. This practice dates back to 1954 when the Nation Party was dissolved for violating the principle of secularism. Since its establishment ensuing the coup of the 1960, the Constitutional Court has banned 27 political parties on the grounds of either violating the principle of secularism or constituting a threat against nationality and territorial integrity, and a total of 19 requests for party closure were voted down by the court (Celep 2014).

Newspapers were published within the political and cultural bounds drawn by these institutions and their measures until the 2000s although the journalistic field changed shape as the political system shifted. In the early days of the republic, in particular, journalists and newspapers operated primarily as media organs of the single party rule, advocating

⁸ Sunni Islam is a denomination of Islam. The Ottoman state historically adhered to the teachings of Sunni Islam and oppressed Alevis, another branch of Islam, because of their heterodox beliefs and practices. In Turkey, a significant portion of Sunnis view themselves as the historical owners of the state and support conservative right-wing or political Islamist parties against the republicans. A significant portion of Alevis, on the other hand, supports left wing or social democratic parties in staunch defense of secularism in the country.

westernization. They assumed a crucial role in introducing the modernizing reforms to the public (Heper & Demirel 1996). The emergence of mainstream newspapers that target masses and the journalistic field as a relatively independent domain of activity from the state went hand in hand with the transition to a multi-party system in the country in 1945.

The establishment of mainstream newspapers such as *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* in 1948 are graphic examples of this parallel emergence. The first school of journalism in Turkey, which was a private school, also dates back to 1948. As claimed in the flyers of the school, the school aimed to raise “employees ready to join the press universe as well as work life.” (Tılıç 2001). The second school of journalism was opened at a state university, Istanbul University, upon the demand of the owner and founder of the daily *Hürriyet*, Sedat Simavi (Tılıç 2001). Moreover, the legal framework of the journalistic profession was formed at this time through a 1950 press law. With the new law, newspaper publication stopped being dependent on official permission; the criminal liability of newspaper owners was transferred to editorial staff and press offences were made subject to the jurisdiction of press courts (Kabacalı 1994). Another law regulating the relationship between employees and employers in the press sector followed in 1952, and for the first time press workers were granted social security and the right to unionize (Adaklı 2006). Overall, since the late 1940s, the press has gained relative autonomy from the state and the number of privately-owned newspapers has consistently been on the rise.

From the late 1940s to the late 1970s, family-run newspapers dominated the field. Owners of these newspapers were journalists devoted to the profession and they often acted as the editor-in-chief or the lead writer of the newspaper that they owned. Examples include *Cumhuriyet* owned by Yunus Nadi, *Hürriyet* owned by Sedat Simavi, *Milliyet* owned by Ali

Naci Karacan, *Vatan* owned by Ahmet Emin Yalman, and *Akşam* owned by Necmettin Sadak. These journalist-owners, who were more experienced than their employees, made their living on journalism and were very strict on editorial issues (Tunç 2004). They put particular emphasis on the development of technical infrastructure for journalism in Turkey (Adaklı 2006).

Disputes and negotiations between the owners and the journalists in these newspapers would therefore involve primarily editorial affairs. Hasan Cemal, who was the chief editor of *Cumhuriyet* between 1981-1992, provides an example. When Nadir Nadi, who was the owner and the lead writer of *Cumhuriyet*, appointed him as the chief editor, he asked Cemal not to publish Nadir Nadi's picture or the picture of the Nadi family on the newspaper and not to make radical changes to the structure of the newspaper. Thereby Nadir Nadi implied that he did not want the newspaper to be associated with the family and that he cared for protecting the tradition in the newspaper. Hasan Pulur, who worked at *Milliyet* as an editor between 1968 and 1979, similarly explains the relationship between the owner Ercüment Karacan and the chief editor Abdi İpekçi as one in which Karacan would not intervene in İpekçi's editorial decisions. In his account, Karacan disliked Bülent Ecevit, who was the leader of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) at the time, and his left of the center politics. However, while Karacan criticized the newspaper's adoption of a left of the center stance, teased Ecevit in his private conversations with İpekçi and viewed Ecevit as a communist, he did not intervene in the editorial line of the newspaper (Özvarış 2013). In fact, İpekçi worked as the chief editor of *Milliyet* between 1959 and 1979, until he was murdered by ultra-nationalists.

Clearly non-intervention by the owners did not equal freedom from repression for journalists during this era. Newspapers challenging the state construction of reality were considered a challenge to national identity, and in such cases journalistic autonomy was crippled with various forms of state interference. These included formal censorship, closing down of newspapers, restriction of paper supplies, and jailing and killing of journalists (C. Christensen 2007, M. Christensen 2010, Yeşil 2014). A journalist who is now in his late 80s presents an example of how such pressure affected news content at the time:

A friend of mine had conducted an interview with Talabani [Jalal Talabani, the Iraqi Kurdish politician who served as the President of Iraq between 2005-2014] in the 1970s. ... The interview dealt with the Kurdish issue in northern Iraq. ... I got this interview and gave it to Haldun Simavi [the owner of Hürriyet]. He said, you should make the decision [on whether or not to publish it]. [Addressing] The Kurdish issue was not allowed at that time [in Turkey]. ... [In the interview] there were pictures of Talabani with [traditional] Kurdish clothing. ... I called a friend who was an ambassador working for the ministry of foreign affairs. He looked at the interview. "It is interesting", he said. "But you cannot publish it [in the newspaper], what he says constitutes a crime according to our legal order". Then I called our legal advisor, Prof. Sahir Erman. He said: "This would have good circulation as a news story. But they would ask you why you have published this. You cannot explain your purpose in having it published. I am asking you. I am asking you like a prosecutor. Tell me." I said: "Well, he is a Kurdish leader there." "We don't recognize him", he said. "He is not talking about himself, he is talking about the Kurds in Turkey. Also, we have good relationships with Iraq.

These people are in rebellion.” Anyway, we did not publish it. I had actually paid for this interview.

As the regime of ownership in journalism began to change over the late 1970s, so did the conditions of work, journalists’ attitude toward their profession, and relationships both within the journalistic field and between the press and the state. In this chapter, I lay out this transformation in the ownership regime and its consequences for the profession before delving in the next chapter into a discussion of how a new press grew in the 2000s on the regime of ownership instituted after the 1980s.

The 1980 Coup D’etat, Liberal Economic Restructuring and Newspaper Ownership

Before the late 1970s, businessmen in Turkey were reluctant to enter the media sector despite their dominant role in other sectors (Topuz 2003). A number of businessmen from non-journalist families had bought newspapers in the 1950s. For instance, Safa Kılıçoğlu bought *Yeni Sabah*. Habib Edip Törehan established *Yeni Istanbul* and then sold it to Kemal Uzan, who had running businesses in construction. Yet none of these newspapers survived more than a year or two. Businessmen were therefore not the dominant actors in the field at the time (Adaklı 2006).

In the late 1970s family-owned newspapers came to be acquired one-by-one by businessmen with running businesses in other sectors. For instance, *Milliyet*, which since the 1950s was owned by Karacan family, was sold in 1979 to Aydın Doğan. His Doğan Group (also known as Doğan Holding) turned in the coming years into one of the top industrial conglomerates in Turkey operating in the energy, trade, insurance and tourism sectors along with the media.

Two parallel processes triggered the transfer of media ownership from journalist families to businessmen. First, technological shifts in the press had increased the costs of making a newspaper. Many traditional newspaper owners were no longer able to afford the contemporary press technologies, and had therefore began to sell their newspapers to holders of big capital. The explanation of Bedii Faik, who was the owner of the *Dünya* newspaper, on why he sold his newspaper to a prominent businessman of the time, Ihsan Altınel, in 1975, presents a clear illustration:

We attended an exhibition in Germany... There I saw the industrialization in the press, the future technologies of the press and I was frightened. I said, I don't have this much money and I can't do this. I thought if I continue with the resources I have, the newspaper would be stunted. I didn't think of bank loans or partnerships at the time. ... I sold Dünya to Ihsan Altınel in 1975. (Gazeteciler Cemiyeti 2016)

The second and more important process that triggered the sale of newspapers to businessmen after the late 1970s was the introduction of liberal economic reforms in the economy following the 1980 coup d'état in the country. On September 12, 1980, the military intervened in politics in Turkey. During the military rule all political party elites were banned from the political arena while trade unions as well as civil associations were violently suppressed. In an era where political competition in both the parliament and the civil society was stalled, the press also paid a heavy price. Newspapers were shut down, investigations were launched about the chief editors of prominent newspapers, and many journalists were put on trial and arrested. The newspapers that were still published fell under the control of martial law officers (see Table 1. for statistics on the pressures). Even when the new

constitution, ratified on November 7, 1982, granted the right to freedom of expression, it limited the right to spread and claim one's thoughts with articles that restricted the use of languages other than Turkish, made the published and broadcasted material subject to control and permit, and banned publications which were considered to be against the indivisibility of the nation state.

Table 1. Pressures on the Press between (1980-1984)

Newspaper	Number of times shut down	Number of days shut down	Number of journalists investigated
Milli Gazete	4	72	4
Cumhuriyet	4	41	28
Tercüman	2	29	27
Günaydın	2	17	
Hürriyet	2	7	14
Güneş	1	10	
Milliyet	1	10	14
Tan	1	9	
Others			97
Total	17	195	184

Source: (Topuz 2003, 259)

Political pressures on the press, however, did not stop the entry of business into journalism. On the contrary, the coup paved the way for economic incentives to make businessmen enter the media sector. As explained by both Öniş & Bakır (2007) and Karadağ (2010, 6), “the political and economic crisis dynamics of the late 1970s were resolved by the decision, backed by the Turkish Armed Forces, to dismantle the state capitalist framework in Turkey” -- the import-substituting model of industrialization -- and to introduce liberal economic restructuring reforms. These reforms were introduced by Turgut Özal, who had played a major role in developing the economic reform program known as the “24 January Decisions” that accelerated the rooting of economic liberalism in Turkish economy. Özal was “an unabashed free marketer” (Şahin & Aksoy 1993, 32) and was appointed as the deputy

prime minister responsible for economic affairs in the military government established by the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK) after the 1980 coup. Özal's vision of liberalizing Turkey was guided by the export oriented industrialization (EOI) model (Öniş 1991, Karadağ 2010).

In the context of the transition to EOI, Özal deepened the policies of foreign trade liberalization, initiated the capital account liberalization program (which also foresaw the privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs)), undertook fiscal austerity measures such as reductions in public spending and the introduction of VAT in 1985, and relied on financial incentives for exporting companies such as tax rebates or preferential loans and credits of the newly established Eximbank (Karadağ 2010).

Özal initiated his economic program at a time of severe political pressure. One week after the coup d'état, on September 19, the MGK, which was founded in 1961 as an advisory council on national security related issues, changed Article 3 of the martial law and authorized the martial law authorities to censor the press. All means of broadcasting and communication such as phone, wireless communication devices (walkie talkie), radio, and TV including the broadcasts of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (*Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu*, TRT) could now be censored. Two years later, on December 28, 1982, MGK once again changed the article. This time the scope of censorship was extended to include any spoken and written word, picture, video and audio material; letters, telegraphs and messages; newspapers, magazines, books and all kinds of print media. This revision made communication subject to the permission of martial law authorities, as they were allowed to censor the means of communication and to close down the institutions when they found it necessary.

When the new constitution was ratified in 1982, the constitution included the article that MGK would not be held legally responsible for its acts which are in conflict with the constitution. MGK's recommendations were also made an obligatory priority for the decisions to be taken at the Council of Ministers. In 1983, in addition to holding elections, the law of state of emergency was accepted. With this law regional governors attained the authority to control, ban, and withdraw publications. This meant that Turkey went back to a parliamentary system in 1983 as emergency institutions were normalized into civilian times. While the head of the coup, Kenan Evren, was appointed as the president for the next seven years, Turgut Özal was elected the prime minister (1983-1989), and a government was formed of Özal's party, the Motherland Party (ANAP, *Anavatan Partisi*).

In this post-1980 political system the president, which previously had a symbolic role in the political process, attained an active role with numerous powers at its own disposal (Heper & Çınar 1996)⁹. The Council of Higher Education (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu*, YÖK) and the Radio and Television Supreme Council (*Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu*, RTÜK) were also founded in this era to oversee the activities of respectively the universities and the media. In this context, the Özal government in many ways adopted the centralized nature of decision making of the military order in the aftermath of the 1983 election, and the manner in which the economic program was implemented constituted no exception.

The core of the cost-incentive transition process to an export-led economic order was the promotion of industrial exports through so-called foreign trade companies, most of which belonged to family-run business conglomerations. Where there were no political competitors,

⁹ See Heper & Çınar 1996 for a detailed discussion of the president's legislative and executive powers.

Özal exercised distribution vis-à-vis these prominent family companies, and used incentives in order to sanction non-compliant holding companies (Karadağ 2010). Here I should note that this process was also one of privatization. Rather than trying to enact a formal law on privatization, Özal chose to implement privatization through cabinet decrees. The underlying logic was speed and flexibility in decision making. Through the decrees he also aimed to bypass opposition both in the parliament and the bureaucracy¹⁰ (Öniş 2011). The holding companies complied with his type of governing when it came to obtaining access to state resources (Karadağ 2010).

This centralized nature of decision making brought about embedded relationships between government representatives and businessmen, some of which were interested in the ownership of media outlets. Turgut Özal both personally and structurally encouraged the family-run business conglomerations to take stakes in the media industry. For instance, he provided state subsidies on newsprint. These subsidies for businessmen followed a period in which Özal demolished the mechanisms such as state subsidies that ensured the entry of cheap raw material. For instance in the press, the subsidy on the major raw material for the press, the paper, was abolished in 1980 and the price of paper was increased 300% (Adaklı 2006).

In this period newspaper publication turned into a burden for previous owners, while media ownership turned into a means of exerting influence in return for credits and incentives. Businessmen were often attracted to media ownership not just as businesses in

¹⁰ The legal infrastructure for privatization deals was instituted only in 1994 with the Privatization Law of 1994 and the creation of the Competition Board, whose approval came to be required by the end of the decade (Öniş 2011).

their own right but also for their commercial activities (Finkel 2000, 156). Meanwhile journalist families owning media outlets extended their businesses into non-media fields.

In the second half of the 1980s, Turkish politics came to be dominated by political fragmentation. The former political elites returned to the political stage in 1987 and capitalized on the growing dissatisfaction with ANAP's liberal economic restructuring policies¹¹. In 1991, the first coalition government of the leftist Social Democratic People's Party (*Sosyal-demokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP) and Demirel's right-wing True Path Party (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) were established, which set the stage for the political dynamics of the 1990s. Between 1991 and 2002 Turkey had ten different governments, nine of which were coalition governments. With the end of ANAP's dominance, party leaders came to fight over the rent distribution instruments that Özal had at his disposal during the 1980s (Karadağ 2010).

During Akbulut's (1989-1991), Yılmaz's (1991), Demirel's (1991-1993) and Çiller's (1983-1996) terms as prime minister the media was considered among the sectors that carried special importance (Topuz 2003). Turgut Özal's political successors hence continued to give incentive credits to media outlets. The sum of the credit provided between 1983 and 1996

¹¹ Turkey managed to increase its exports from 2.9 billion US dollars (1980) to 12.9 billion US dollar (1989) within a decade. The share of industrial goods relative to total exports rose from 36.0 per cent to 78.2 percent during these years. These developments were accompanied by increasing growth and decreasing inflation rates until 1987. In addition, while the country's problem of structural indebtedness continued, IMF Special Drawing Rights (1.5 billion US dollars until 1984) and World Bank Structural Adjustment Loans (4.7 billion US dollars until 1985) guaranteed Turkey's access to international capital markets. (Karadağ 2010). However, macro economic indicators did not suffice to prevent welfare reducing effects of the reforms. Turgut Özal and his party ANAP used their patronage capacities to deal with the pressing urbanization and new urban squatter issues. They began to finance private charitable activities to address market-induced poverty without guaranteeing equal and impartial social citizenship rights to the population. These methods could not be upheld over the long term (Buğra 2003, Buğra 2007).

was 2.6 trillion TL (Turkish Lira)¹². The total amount indicated in the letters of guarantee handed by Tansu Çiller to the owners of media outlets in 1995 exceeded the budget of Turkey (Tılıç 2001, 124). In addition, over the 1990s, owners of media outlets acquired cheap state land, indemnities on imported machinery and inexpensive credit from state banks. In fact, it is in this context that newspapers, which had become part of large business conglomerates, moved from *Babiali* -- the historical center of journalism both physically and symbolically -- to the high-rise buildings at the outskirts of the city (Tunç 2003).

After the mid 1990s, media outlets owned by journalist families no longer dominated the field of journalism. The dominant actors in the field were now business conglomerations such as the Doğan Group, the Uzan Group (owned by Uzan family), the Sabah Group (owned by Dinç Bilgin), the Çukurova Group (owned by Karamehmet family), the İhlas Group and the Gülen Group¹³. They owned both newspapers and TV channels. In addition, the Doğan and Sabah Groups owned distribution companies. In the mid 1990s the two

¹² To give an idea of how much this amount equals in US \$, here is the US \$ and TL exchange rate averages over the years. 1983 1 US\$=224 TL, 1984 1 US\$= 364 TL, 1985 1 US\$=518 TL, 1986 1 US\$=669 TL, 1987 1 US\$=855 TL, 1988 1 US\$=1.420 TL, 1989 1US \$=2.120 TL, 1990 1US \$= 2.607 TL, 1991 1US \$=4.169 TL, 1992 1US \$=6.887 TL, 1993 1US \$= 10.986 TL, 1994 1US \$=29.704 TL, 1995 1US \$= 45,673 TL, 1996 1US \$= 81.083 TL. Relying on these average exchange rates and assuming that the amount was distributed equally in TL each year, 2.6 trillion TL would be approximately US\$ 2,6 billion (US\$ 2583265381.04).

¹³ Here I use the Gülen Group to refer to the newspaper of the Gülen movement. The Gülen movement is a religious group that aims to revitalize faith in Turkish state-society relations through projects in education, business, trade, the media and health as well as through setting up its own cadre within the state establishment. In the 1990s the movement was regarded by the Turkish state and the military as a subversive force attempting to undermine the secular Republic. Fetullah Gülen departed for the US in 1998 upon a public scandal alleging that he brainwashed schoolchildren at his schools and aimed to infiltrate all state organizations. He lives in the US ever since. More recently, the Gülen movement once again came to be regarded by the Turkish state as a subversive force for attempting to undermine the rule of the AKP.

conglomerations merged their distribution companies, increasing their dominance over the field as well as the dependency of other outlets on these two conglomerations. For instance, in the mid 1990s the Doğan-Bilgin distribution alliance was able to stop the distribution of *Akşam* newspaper owned by Ilıcak family (Tılıç 2001).

The emergence of business conglomerations as the dominant actor in the field of journalism also affected politics and economy. These groups used their media power as a means of acquiring profitable deals and resources -- at times at the cost of undermining the capacities of state institutions. One good example is the attacks directed by a TV station in 1995 at the head of the Capital Market's Board (*Sermaye Piyasası Kurulu*, SPK) (Finkel 2000). SPK was trying to protect minority share holders in the electrical generating and distribution company in the city of Adana. It had taken issue with the holding company that owned both the TV station and the power company, accusing it of stripping the assets of the company by depositing revenues at no interest in the bank that was also owned by the same holding company. This cash allowed the group to bid for more privatization tenders -- a cycle which would keep it close to the government (Finkel 2000).

Given that this was a time of fierce political competition between weak political parties, business conglomerations with competing economic and political interests were affiliated with varying political parties. In their competition with one another for access to state resources, they succeeded by promising to back the party in power and by denigrating its competitors. One graphic example of such a relationship is the scandal which helped topple the Yılmaz government in 1998 (Finkel 2000). Korkmaz Yiğit, who made his fortune in construction, won the state tender in nationalization of the state-owned Turkish Trade Bank (*Türk Ticaret Bankası*, TTB). He expanded his business into media by buying two

national newspapers and two television stations. He was subsequently arrested on charges of having links to organized crime to enable him to compete successfully for the Turkish Trade Bank tender. In his defense he noted that his ambitions had been encouraged by ministers, themselves anxious to have a media owner on their side (Finkel 2000, 156).

New Owners, New Professional Relationships, and the New Journalist

Given the militarized atmosphere and Özal's incentive-punishment strategies, the 1980s was not an easy time for newspaper owners and journalists. While Özal established thick personal relationships with those who supported him, inviting them over to his residency and chatting with them, he engaged in quarrels with critical journalists and resorted to suppressive measures such as restriction of paper supplies or direct censorship of newspapers. This attitude towards journalism often triggered quarrels with journalist owners of newspapers. A letter written by Erol Simavi, the owner of the daily *Hürriyet* at the time, presents an example of how Özal's attitude and the measures instrumentalized in the suppression of the press were perceived over the late 1980s:

Dear Prime Minister, you used to be a person that we liked and set our hopes on. I should confess that I cannot recognize you anymore. ... I can summarize the effect of the bypass surgery on you [Özal had a bypass surgery at that time] in a few words: Hate from the press! Since you came back from your health related travel you strive to force us into a corner. I have to hand it to you, you are successful. [But] You are not content. You dream of forcing us more and more into the corner. You experience this by-pass reality but you forget about another: Even if you were a giant watchdog, attacking a tiny tiny tabby cat, the tabby cat

would respond back for its dear life by scratching your face. Clearly, neither you nor us are those creatures. However, I am hammering home: We are the landlords, you are the traveler. Some evenings, I come face-to-face with you when I see you on the screen of my TV. I look at you, you are yelling. You spray the words from your lips and scatter them around: "The press lies!" [Here, Simavi refers to Özal's reaction to the news about his daughter buying a Jaguar brand car. When the news was proven true, Özal's daughter returned the car.] It's then that I revolt: No, dear prime minister! The press does not lie. There is no one amongst my colleagues who would tolerate wrong news let alone lies. I accept: In your majestic age press is not liked. I don't think newspapers are held dear by the public. I witness that you fuel this atmosphere each day in schadenfreude. What an unprincipled system is this. With a sign of your thumb the prosecutors work on Sundays and pull the newspapers from the market. What a disgraced state apparatus is this. With an eyewink of yours it raises the prices of paper." (Erol Simavi's letter to Turgut Özal, 19.04.1988).

In this period, in addition to newspaper closures and manipulation of paper prices, courts also became an instrument for dealing with critical journalists. In the aftermath of the military period, the military courts were normalized into the civilian court system through the establishment of State Security Courts. State Security Courts had jurisdiction over crimes against the state, and journalists critical of state construction of reality continued to be judged at State Security Courts. Here I should note that the armed conflict between the Kurdistan Workers Party (*Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan*, PKK) and the Turkish Armed Forces began in the August of 1984. A state of emergency was declared in 11 cities in the southeast of Turkey

over this transition from military rule. In this context, distribution of some newspapers was banned under the state of emergency. Many journalists and intellectuals who criticized the state's policies of violence against Kurds were tried at the State Security Courts. In 1991, *Bizim Gazete*, the newspaper of the Turkish Journalists' Association, reported that between 1983 and 1991, 1392 lawsuits were brought against journalists. In 1994, 41 percent of the trials opened at Istanbul State Security Court were opened against journalists (Tılıç 2001, 142).

In this era laws were also amended to fit with the measures of pressure. In 1986, ANAP changed the law on obscene publications. The law dated back to 1927. Conservative groups complained about the newspapers for having obscene publications, and Özal government revised the law to incrementally increase criminal fines. With this law, Özal also established a group within the prime ministry to control the content of publications. In the early 1990s, with the escalation of armed conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK, censorship decrees and the anti terror law of 1991 added onto this repressive regime. In fact, the trials at the State Security Courts, which were filed against journalists and intellectuals, were often grounded in the anti-terror law, the 8th clause of which allowed for the categorization of any criticism as separatist propaganda.

In such an atmosphere, Turkey was categorized among one of the most dangerous countries for journalists (IFJ 1993). In 1996 Turkey became the country with the highest number of incarcerated journalists in the world (CPJ 1996). International press organizations such as the International Press Institute (IPI) warned politicians that if Turkey wanted to join the European Union (EU) it would have to bring its laws and courts in line with the European criteria on the freedom of expression.

The transformation in the ownership regime thus took place in such an atmosphere of continuing political pressure and affected journalists' attitudes toward the profession as well as relationships in the field of journalism. Back in 1984, Uğur Mumcu, a prominent journalist, foresaw the domination of the press by business conglomerations and wrote the play "*Sakıncasız*", which translates into English as "Unobjectionable", to address its consequences for journalism and journalists. Accordingly, a new type of journalist was on the rise. Even the most publicly concerned journalists had now adopted a business mentality, were concerned with economic interests, and were denouncing their previous ties to publicly concerned journalists as well as to the ethical ideals of journalism (Mumcu 1984).

Mumcu did not err in his diagnosis. As the new ownership regime dominated the press, those engaging in a rent relationship with political actors remained in the mainstream, while those striving for autonomy from rent seeking relationships were pushed to the margins. In the new setting, mainstream media outlets grew in size and complexity of operations and adopted modern principles of business management (Tunç 2004). To give an idea of the size of media outlets at the time, the founder of the *Radikal* newspaper, which was founded in 1996, notes that a newspaper of 24 pages would not be able to have more than 170-180 people to work for the newspaper. He adds that they started the daily *Radikal* with 75-80 people (Özvarış 2014b).

The restructuration of the media according to business principles led to the rise of a media elite and the disempowerment of ordinary journalists. The media elite was composed of owners, chief editors and prominent columnists. The profile of the new owner was a typical businessman, a stranger to the profession who accumulated his capital in a different

sector and aimed to use the media as a weapon to promote other business activities (Tunç 2004).

One of my interviewees, an experienced journalist in his 60s, describes this transformation as a decline in chivalry. Another adds that with the September 1980 coup, Turkey's experienced and wise generation of journalists were estranged from the profession without being able to transfer their knowledge to the new generation. In his account, as a consequence of the elimination of these journalists and the changes in both press technology and media-ownership, the new generation of journalists lost their ethical values. The new owners such as the owner of the Doğan Group, Aydın Doğan, also acknowledge this transformation although with a positive spin:

Newspaper ownership has been transformed. ... [N]ewspapers [owned by journalists] have become extinct in the world, too. Old journalist friends who care a lot about ethics should get rid of this feeling. The first principle of publication is economic independence. That means, you should be able to exist without expecting anything from the banks or businessmen. You should be able to make money through journalism. I don't understand the mentality here [in Turkey]. Murdoch is in banking, in flight management. That's considered normal, but ours is claimed to be unfit with the ethics of journalism. ... We have to abide by the necessities of the time. We should leave aside the mentality that dictated that newspaper owners should not be engaged in businesses other than journalism (Karaca 2015, 186).

In the new era, these non-journalist owners had total control over editorial policies, resource allocation, employee salaries, promotion and dismissal of staff, and especially over

the appointment of the chief editors. The “chosen” chief editors would serve the bosses as managers, enjoying astronomical salaries. Tılıç (2001, 3) notes that entry-level journalists would often work for no money as an intern, an average medium level full timer journalist would earn approximately US \$500-1000 a month, and elite journalists would earn approximately \$5000-10000 a month. One of my interviewees described this income gap as one in which those at the top of the professional hierarchy lived as if they were in Sweden, while those at the bottom lived as if they were in Bangladesh.

According to Tılıç (2001), the transformation in the chief editors’ role also affected their attitude towards journalism. He adds that this is most clearly illustrated by their increasing reluctance to resign from their posts in the face of attacks to editorial independence. He notes that the history of journalism is full of stories of chief editors who resign from their posts in the face of a decline in editorial independence. Yet, in the 1990s despite excessive pressure on the media, chief editors were reluctant to resign from their posts.

Given the rent seeking relationships between the politicians and the owners of business conglomerations, media elites, including chief editors, often acted as public relationship agents for businessmen. In a well-documented case, a chief editor was revealed to have made contacts with a minister to help secure industrial incentives for the parent company that owned his newspaper. Upon charges of corrupting journalism, he defended his position by noting that he was jointly appointed as the chief editor of the newspaper and the president of the most senior executive directors of the media group. He added that as an executive director of the media group he had an obligation to pursue the business affairs of the group (Finkel 2000, 158). In a similar vein, many prominent columnists would select

their topics of concern in accordance with the interests of their owners in the economy and politics. In this new system, the elites hence had more in common with the owners than their colleagues. They prioritized business interests over journalism (Tunç 2003).

Given that the media owners had access to resources such as land for their buildings, tax reductions and paper subsidies through Özal's and his successors' distribution policies, ordinary journalists fared relatively better income-wise in the 1990s. One of my interviewees noted that when Aydın Doğan, the owner of the Doğan Group, and Dinç Bilgin, the owner of Sabah Group, turned into media giants in the second half of the 1990s, there was a lot of money in the media sector. The mainstream media paid quite well at the time. He added that during the 2000s their income has declined to a degree that he could barely make it through the month.

Monetary gains, however, were often received at the expense of legal and organizational protections for journalists. Unionization in the 1980s was not strong even under the ownership of journalist families. The story of one of my journalist interviewees presents a tragicomical illustration of the state of unions in journalist-family owned mainstream newspapers:

When I started working as a journalist [in the 1980s], my first job was at the Günaydın newspaper. Before I began to work there, they laid down the condition to bring a document testifying that I am not a member of a union. Obviously, under normal circumstances no such document exists. How could there be a document that states: "this person is not a member of our union." Anyway, I really wanted this job and I went to the Ankara branch of the Turkish Journalists Union (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, TGS) [to ask for such a document]. ...

First they found my request quite strange but then they provided the document.

They pitied me. ... That's how I got the job at the Günaydın newspaper.

The coup and the economic restructuring it brought have further eroded the rights of workers, including press workers. In the days following the coup, the president of the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (*Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, TİSK*) had clearly expressed their stance vis-à-vis the workers during the military era: “Up to this day the workers laughed, as of today we will be the ones to laugh.” In the aftermath of the coup, print workers were dissociated from the journalism. The TGS lost half of its members (Alan 2015).

The decline in the number of unionized workers at news outlets paved the way for employers to force journalists to work outside the status of press laborer. Working outside the status of press laborer meant not being subject to Act 212 on Labour-Management Relations in the Press, the law that grants special benefits to journalists, such as early retirement and high minimum wages. Media owners would often force all their employees to sign a document testifying that they were working under Clause 1475 (Labour Act) of the law governing relationships between employers and employees instead of Clause 212 (Act on Labour-Management Relations in the Press) of the same law (Tunç 2003). Working outside of Act 212, journalists could not obtain a press card and therefore not become a member of TGS, which was the only trade union with the authority to negotiate collective agreements for journalists (Tunç 2013).

Nevertheless, TGS could at least negotiate collective agreements with most major newspapers. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, pressure from media owners put an end to the influence of the union in newspapers and further discouraged union organizing (C.

Christensen 2007). In 1990 the negotiations between the TGS and the Union of Turkish Newspaper Owners (*Türkiye Gazete Sahipleri Sendikası*, TGSS) on collective agreements remained inconclusive. TGS hence made the decision to go on strike at *Milliyet*, *Tercüman* and *Cumhuriyet* newspapers. In response, Aydın Doğan, the owner of *Milliyet* and also the president of TGSS at the time, decided on lock-out, separated the technical jobs in *Milliyet* from the main body of the newspaper and presented these workers as having quit their jobs while re-hiring them in his subcontracting firms. In this rehiring process, he made sure that the employees were not unionized. 128 employees hence appeared to be dismissed from the newspaper and stripped of union membership. In the process, those who refused to work in the subcontracting firm were sacked. Overall, as the TGS lost the needed 51% majority in the newspaper, so did it lose its right to collective agreement (Alan 2015). Similarly, at *Tercüman*, when journalists, who had not been paid their salaries for the last eight months, resorted to work stoppage and built lines in front of the accounting office, the owners fired 100 journalists on the grounds of preventing the newspaper to be prepared.

In an interview in 2002, Doğan blamed TGS for the bankruptcies at *Tercüman* and *Güneş* newspapers and noted that *Milliyet* was left behind due union membership expenses in the competition with *Sabah*, where there was no union and where technological developments were stronger. He then added that he had asked his employees at *Milliyet* to resign from union membership to improve the conditions in the newspaper and that those who have resigned were happy in the aftermath (Tavşanoğlu 2002). TGS, on the other hand, noted in its 1989-1992 Report of the Board of Directors, that to defend the union in the *Milliyet* case the TGS had taken the decision to boycott the newspaper. However, the boycott was ineffective and journalists agreed to resign from the union. Many among the prominent

journalists of *Milliyet* later confirmed that they had too easily accepted being deunionized (Adaklı 2006).

The process of de-unionization that was initiated at *Milliyet* in 1991 then spread to the rest of the media. Between January and October of 1991, 1841 journalists were sacked¹⁴. When Doğan Group bought *Hürriyet* in 1994, similar tactics were implemented there as well. In fact, it is said that before Doğan bought *Hürriyet*, he had told its then owner Erol Simavi: “I would buy this newspaper but the employees should first resign from the union.” The chief editor of *Hürriyet* at the time, who is said to have organized de-unionization within the newspaper, noted that in the conditions prevailing in Turkey at that time it was impossible to work with the unions and that they defended a merit-based salary payments strategy instead. In his account, unions were outdated. In the process, 90% of unionized employees working at *Hürriyet* had resigned, while the union lost about 800 members (Alan 2015).

A clear consequence of the decline in unionization rates was the elimination of collective agreements (Topuz 2003). Moreover, after the mid 1990s, media owners made sure that journalists working for their companies were not unionized. Attempts to unionize in the workplace often resulted in dismissals. The loss of organizational protections vis-à-vis the owners weakened the journalists not only in the newspaper that they worked at but in the mainstream media in general. The experience of a reporter who struggled for unionization over the late 1990s illustrates how hard it became to find a job at another media outlet if sacked on the grounds of unionization:

¹⁴ Between January and March of 1991, 695 people were fired (385 from *Günaydın*, 250 from *Güneş*, 42 from *Milliyet* and 18 from *Hürriyet*). In July 42 people were fired from *Cumhuriyet* and 100 people were fired from *Tercüman*. In September 59 people were fired from *Güneş* (Topuz 2003).

I got involved in a struggle for unionization in the [last mainstream] newspaper [that I worked for] and I ended up being fired because of my struggle and my understanding of journalism¹⁵. When they fired me, they told me: “you’ll be fired and you’re not going to be able to find a job in another news outlet”. And they did what they said. In a system like this one, even when the different mainstream media outlets seem to be engaged in a fight, they don’t hire a journalist that the other would not hire. In the 1990’s they called this a “Gentlemen’s Agreement.” There were lists [of journalists] circulating among mainstream media institutions, especially between the Doğan Group and the Sabah Group. ... Every month they would send one another lists of personnel who is not going to be allowed to work in their institutions -- a black list, so to say. A person fired by one would not be hired by the other. After being fired from Radikal they did not let me work in the mainstream media again. Shortly after being fired from Radikal, I received an offer from the magazine Aktüel, a magazine of the Sabah Group. The chief editor had invited me to Aktüel. I went, we talked and we reached an agreement. So, I started working. On the fourth day, ... he said he cannot hire me: “you have an ongoing trial with Doğan, there is something that is beyond my control, we therefore cannot hire you”. ... At the time, the newspaper Akşam belonged to Çukurova Group. I received an offer from Akşam. ... Three days later, he said, “I am sorry but I cannot hire you”. ... Another example is Skye. A friend was managing the channel. ... But even he couldn’t hire me. He told me: “When I

¹⁵ The official reason provided for firing the reporter was low performance, however when he sued the employer he won the case.

went to the HR office they told me not to hire you and I saw your file. There was a file with your record at the police, your union activities, the trials opened against you at the newspaper, how many times you were incarcerated, what kind of journalist you are, your risks for the employer etc. All those were in your file.” I told him that he should get me a copy of that file instead of hiring me.

Another journalist notes that even at the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, known for its stance against the commercialization in the profession and for a different ownership structure that respects journalistic autonomy, the attitude towards unionization fluctuated in the late 1990s:

In 1999, I was on leave for doing my military service. Upon my return, they set a sheet before me to sign. They told me that they had removed unionization at the workplace when I was away, that everyone but me had signed this sheet, that I did not sign it because I was doing my military service and if I were to decline to sign the sheet I would be dismissed. At the time I was already thinking of leaving Cumhuriyet. But I was caught flat footed. Everyone had signed it, I couldn't act otherwise, and I signed the sheet. If I had not signed it and they had fired me I would actually get more severance payment. But I am not sure if this would be better or worse since other mainstream media stations would not want to hire such a person as an employee. Neither the Doğan Group nor the Sabah Group would want someone who declined to sign a document not to leave the union.

Young journalists would often work as unpaid interns hoping to be hired sometime in the near future. Several of my interviewees noted that as young journalists in the 1990s they worked informally and uninsured, that they cannot get those days counted for their pension

benefits and that they had accepted the situation without question at the time since the entire system was built on this mentality.

In short, media outlets and their elites emerged as powerful actors vis-à-vis politicians, professional organizations and journalists. This eased the destruction of existing traditions that protected journalists and their associational life also ordinary. One prominent example is the case of journalists losing their right to holiday on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days of the religious holidays of “Bayram”. The press law that dates back to 1952 used to ban the publication of newspapers on the 2nd and 3rd days of the Ramadan Holiday and on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th days of the Kurban Holiday. It gave the right to publish newspapers on those days to Journalists’ Associations in each city. The goal of the law was to grant holiday time to journalists and to help the associations to create some revenue for the foundation. On those days, associations would hire unemployed journalists to prepare the holiday newspaper. With the revenues gained from these newspapers, associations would help the unemployed journalists, provide support for the retired, newly wed or the widowed, and open social facilities for journalists. They would also work to make the association independent in its relationships with the state and the media owners. In 1992, the Sabah Group destroyed this tradition when it claimed that it was going to publish the newspaper *Sabah* during the Bayram holiday. The tradition was brought to an end when the ministers, the courts and some journalist organizations refrained from standing against its destruction.

Here I should note that while conservative-religious media outlets such as *Yeni Şafak* claimed to be victims of state repression and criticized the mainstream media for openly siding with the state and for their managerial practices that oppressed journalists, the news director in the Ankara branch of *YeniŞafak*, who was dismissed in 2001, notes in a letter that

management at *YeniŞafak* did not differ much from its counterparts in the mainstream media when it came to relationship with press workers (Tılıç 2001, 28):

Contrary to the terms of Act 212, salaries are not paid in advance but after the completion of work. Even then, salaries are usually delayed for two months. The salaries paid in June are the salaries for April. Payments are not made with pay roll but with advance loan slips or by getting signatures on a list. It is unclear if the real amount of salaries are shown in the pay roll and it is not clear how social security premiums are calculated. National holiday days are not recognized and overtime payments are not made. The newspaper was transferred with a simulated transaction from YeniŞafak A.Ş. to Dyalog Ltd. Company. On this ground, the contracts are renewed in such a way as to leave the boxes for salary, duty and location of profession blank. Severance payment boxes are also left blank. The required increases on wage and food allowance in February 2001 are not made. They employ people without insurance. Overall, the newspaper is managed in ways that clash with the claimed values of the newspaper, the traditional methods of management in the journalism as well as the related laws.

The Practice of Journalism under New Professional Relationships

Clearly the transformation in the ownership regime and the consequential shift in the relational dynamics of the field of journalism affected the practice of journalism at various levels. One consequence was the dominance of business conglomerations and corporate mentality in news-making. This is most clearly exemplified by the explosion in the promotion campaigns of newspapers between 1988 and 1996. In these campaigns,

newspapers distributed to their readers the following: vacation, cars, TVs, bicycles, pillows, lottery tickets, washing machines, dishwashers, tapes, bags, toys, ovens, make-up sets, encyclopedias, videos, heaters, the Koran and toothpaste. As a consequence of these campaigns the daily circulation rates skyrocketed -- at the beginning of 1994, the total readership of all newspapers was 5 million which later dropped back to 2,5 million. In 1996, a new law was passed that banned promotion of any goods except for cultural materials and publications. Here I should note that *Sabah* and *Hürriyet* newspapers broke this ban until the fines for breaking the law were increased in 1997 (Topuz 2003).

A second and more lasting consequence was that journalism became more responsive to political pressure. The fact that business conglomerates relied on government licenses, subsidies, and privatization deals to conduct business in other sectors made them extremely vulnerable. Moreover, given that journalists were deprived of their legal and organizational protections, their salaries, their weekly holidays and their daily working hours were all now completely under the control of their bosses. In this context, editorial lines and news content aligned with the business interests of the owners, which often involved engagements with political actors.

Given high degrees of power dispersion during the 1990s, businessmen owners of media outlets and politicians were able to exercise power over one another. Aydın Doğan gives the example of how before 1995, the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller was pressuring him by acting with *Sabah* and *Akşam* newspapers, and how he fought against them all (Karaca 2015, 179). Moreover, journalists working for one group would often be able to write about the other media group as well as the political party affiliated with the rival company so long as they did not challenge the interests of the owners of their own institution. This means that

over the 1990s and early 2000s, while journalists were professionally disempowered, they would be able to write on topics where media owners were in disagreement.

For instance, *Milliyet* was the newspaper to reveal the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller's (1993-1996) wealth in the US that she consistently had declined. Aydın Doğan, the owner of *Milliyet* at the time, notes that Tansu Çiller used an advertising agency to pressure the paper not to publish this story (Karaca 2015, 183). It was again *Milliyet* that revealed the documents of the 500 billion TL that Çiller withdrew from the discretionary fund. Çiller had tried to explain the scandal with the words "If I explain, a war will break out and the world will fall out." It was also the press that found out that her company had not paid a single dime in taxes (Akin 2014a).

In another example from the end of 1994 and the beginning of 1995, ANAP and its President Mesut Yılmaz were severely attacked by the daily *Sabah*. Yılmaz claimed that these attacks were launched because the owner of Sabah Group, Dinç Bilgin, wanted to buy Bank Indosuez owned by Emlakbank back then. Yılmaz further noted that Dinç Bilgin and the chief editor of *Sabah*, Zafer Mutlu, were pressuring him to engage in coalition with Tansu Çiller and that they were attacking him because he had declined to do so (Tılıç 2001, 123). In this atmosphere, some media owners and chief editors saw themselves as more powerful than politicians (Topuz 2003).

The severe conflict between Doğan and Uzan Groups over the late 1990s and the early 2000s exemplifies that in this period news about rival conglomerations were also welcome. On October 1st of 2001, the headline of the daily *Star* owned by Uzan Group was "Here we have the documents for Doğan's humbug", while the news underneath read that they were opening the biggest fraud file of history. On the same day, the daily *Hürriyet*

owned by the Doğan Group had the headline “The first money laundering trial is opened against Uzan.” While *Star* had Aydın Doğan’s photograph next to the news, *Hürriyet* had Cem Uzan’s photograph next to its headline (Tılıç 2001).

Here I should note that when it came to their own bosses journalists were not as free as when they were writing about the rivals of their bosses. In cases where journalists exposed the interests of their own papers’ owners, they encountered dismissals. One of my interviewees explains what happened in one such instance:

Ege Bank went bankrupt. [In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a major topic was corruption in the banks and the appropriation of banks by the state]. It belonged to the nephew of the president of the time, Süleyman Demirel. When Egebank went bankrupt, there was a discussion about an interesting relationship between Murat Demirel, the owner of the bank, and Nail Keçili, the owner of Cen Ajans, which handled public relations of the bank. It was claimed that the two had no relationship. Our reporter brought a photograph, in which these two people were at a night out, having fun together. They were drinking alcohol etc. I published that photograph. At night, I was pressured to remove that photograph. Umur Talu [the chief editor] and Yalçın Doğan [the editorial coordinator] did not want to remove the photograph. Interestingly, the boss did not make them withdraw the photograph either. ... The next day both of them were removed from their posts.

Finally, the state’s red lines regarding content were binding. On topics of agreement such as ethnic and religious backlash, where businessmen owners of newspapers shared the vision of the state, journalists would not be able to go beyond the state vision in news-

making¹⁶. Acting otherwise would mean placing the interests of the state and the interests of the owners into conflict. Below I present two examples from the 1990s to illustrate what news-making entailed for journalists in the mainstream media when it came to topics of agreement between the state and the media owners:

The Armed Conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces

One issue where the mainstream media and the state acted in concert was the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military. This conflict lasted from the late 1980s to the early 2000s and took place mainly in southeastern Turkey but also involved armed encounters in the big cities in the west of Turkey. The conflict reached its peak during the early and mid 1990s.

After having long denied the existence of Kurds and the ethnic aspect of the Kurdish question, the state conceded on both during the late 1980s. In 1987, a member of Turgut Özal's cabinet, Adnan Kahveci, prepared a report on the Kurdish issue. In the report he noted that the Kurdish problem was more crucial than the inflation problem (at 78 percent at that time), that Turkish governments had not achieved the democratic maturity necessary to solve the problem and that the military's methods had brought the region to the brink of civil war. He also suggested the necessity for the recognition of the Kurdish language, improvement of the opportunities for the political representation of the Kurds and a revision in Turkey's conception of minority (Ersanlı & Özdoğan 2011). However, this attitude was soon superseded with the perception that Kurds were disloyal to the Republic, and a politics of

¹⁶ Clearly there were degrees of alignment. According to Aydın Doğan, *Milliyet* was a little bit on the left and *Hürriyet* was a statist newspaper (Karaca 2015, 185). Similarly, the founder and the editorial director of *Radikal* Mehmet Y. Yılmaz, noted that *Radikal*, with a center left editorial line, could exist in the same media group with *Hürriyet*, which had a centrist political stance (Özvarış 2014b).

oppression followed between 1993 and 1999 (Yeğen 2011). The legislative framework of this politics of oppression was drawn with the anti-terror law of 1991 that limited the activities of Kurdish politicians, civil society organizations and the press with charges of terrorism.

Correspondingly, this was a time when Turkey's human rights violations were highest. Torture was heavy and systematic. Almost everyone who was arrested was tortured. Many were lost under arrest or killed on the streets. Journalists were not an exception. The state directly targeted the newspapers and journalists who addressed the issue from a non-state-controlled perspective¹⁷. Here I should note that there were also special laws for controlling the news about the southeast region which was under State of Emergency at the time (see Figure 6. For an illustration of State of Emergency regions over the years). For instance, one statutory decree regulated the temporary or permanent banning of the publication, multiplication and distribution of any written work and the closing down of related printing houses (Bayram 2011).

¹⁷ Çetin Emeç, the chief editor of *Hürriyet*, was gunned down in his car in 1990. Musa Anter, a journalist for the pro-Kurdish newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, was killed on his way home in Diyarbakır in 1992. Uğur Mumcu, a staunch secularist reporter and columnist for *Cumhuriyet*, was blown up by a car bomb outside his home in 1993 (Tunç 2003, 6).

1980-1983: Martial Law



1984: Martial Law & Civilian Rule



1985: Martial Law & Civilian Rule



1987: State of Emergency & Civilian Rule



1996: State of Emergency & Civilian Rule



2002: Civilian Rule



Figure 4. State of Emergency in Turkey (1980-2002)

Note: Green denotes civilian rule. Red denotes martial law or state of emergency. Illustrations by Defne Över.

State officials were quite clear in their expectations of journalists. In 1987, the governor of the State of Emergency Region, Hayri Kozakçıoğlu, noted in a speech that journalists should address the conflict as if they were addressing a Turkish national soccer team's game. Similarly, in 1990, President Özal gathered owners and representatives of major newspapers including *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Yeni Asır*, *Tercüman*, *Günaydın*, *Güneş*, *Türkiye*, *Daily News*, *Anka News Agency*, *Cumhuriyet* along with MGK Secretary General, Governor of the State of Emergency region and the undersecretary of National Intelligence

Agency in a meeting on the PKK, the southeast and the press. In the meeting, state officials asked the representatives of the media to be careful with their headlines, to build soldiers' morale, and to ignore "small mistakes" by the state. Özal, in particular, read a declaration from 1919 which started with "You, the traitor journalist!" and ended with a threat: "your end will not be much different than Ali Kemal, Said Molla [those considered as traitors and were killed at the time]!" When Aydın Doğan noted that in the war between the UK and Argentina, BBC was able to carry out objective journalism, MGK Secretary responded: "you can give the news but you shouldn't be instrumentalized in propaganda [of the PKK]." (Cemal 2011).

In an interview that I conducted, an official from RTÜK noted that at that time RTÜK was quite sensitive towards ethnic separatism. One time they had even closed a radio station in Sivas (a city in Turkey) for six months for playing a song that they thought said "İmralım" -- referring to the island where Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was incarcerated -- and sent greetings to the leader of the PKK, while the song actually was a folk song from the Sivas region that said "İmranlım" -- referring to a district of Sivas¹⁸.

The newly instituted professional relationship structure made things worse for journalists working in the mainstream media. With the escalation of the armed conflict, state

¹⁸ Here I should note that the same official noted in his interview that when they opened a branch in Diyarbakır, the person appointed for Diyarbakır was afraid of reporting on what they called "separatist" publications on the grounds of threats by the PKK. According to the interviewee, the official in Diyarbakır had said: "There are separatist publications 24 hours a day here but I cannot punish a TV station or close a radio station. They would kill me or my family. I am sorry. You should either get me off from here or I will be here but won't report on anything." The interviewee notes that therefore they had to rely not on the reports from their own official but to the reports from the police in the region. He described the publications punished at the time as falling outside the limits of freedom of expression, aiming at establishing a new state, creating ethnic separation, and praising violence.

officials and owners became increasingly entwined and eventually they reached an agreement. Bayram (2011) notes that in exchange for the mainstream media's collaboration with the state in its fight against terrorism, the media groups would be offered financial aid. This meant news production in accordance with state interests. Mainstream newspapers either relied on military reports or ignored or distorted the news delivered to them by the journalists reporting from the region.

Mainstream journalists were often unable to veer from the state narrative on the conflict. A journalist notes that he was scolded in 1986 by his news director for translating a news by *Reuters* that used the words "Turkish Kurds" verbatim into Turkish (Dağıstanlı 2014, 19). Another journalist notes that when Abdullah Öcalan was captured by the state in 1999, he was reporting live on TV and that during the live footage he constantly received warnings from the headphone to use adjectives like "terrorist" and "baby killer" to describe Öcalan each time he mentioned Öcalan's name (Güç 2012). For journalists working in big cities like Istanbul or Ankara this meant self-censorship:

Censorship existed there [in the region]. It was the military and the police force behind the censorship. But here the minds were confined. ... We would publish [on the issue] but we also knew what we could write or what could get published when we write. So we had internalized the censorship.

In cases where journalism pushed the boundaries drawn by the state journalists faced severe consequences. One example is *Milliyet* writer Mehmet Ali Birand. When he conducted the first interview with Abdullah Öcalan in 1988, *Milliyet* was collected and put under a ban. In addition, Birand personally encountered threats. In the following, he presents an account on what he experienced after conducting the Öcalan interview:

I talked to him [Abdullah Öcalan] as a journalist and in the aftermath I have had a run of bad luck. I was treated as if I had created Öcalan. One trial followed another. [First, I had] The corruption trial at TRT. Next, I was tried for praising terror and a terrorist organization. Why? Because I wrote that he was a fan of Galatasaray [a major soccer team] and that he bred pigeons [thereby presenting him as a human being]. (Birand 2012)

Another journalist from *Sabah* group writes:

In 1992, I was working for Sabah. The head of the local news department told me to go to Şırnak [a city that remained under bombardment for three days.]. He said the president was coming there with the mayor of Siirt [another city in the region], Selim Sadak. In Şırnak, all buildings were torn. All animals dead. Dead bodies around. It was like hell. I saw people, hands tied, tied to a panzer, being carried off into the military quarters. I photographed that scene. Then I realized that they [the Special Operation Forces] saw me taking the picture. While the Special Operation Forces were coming after me, the president arrived to the same spot. I was really scared. I approached the president and told him: “Esteemed President, they are here to get me, they are going to kill me.” He looked at the Chief of the General Staff, Doğan Pasha, and asked me the name of the newspaper that I was working for. I said Sabah and [I added] that I came to take photographs of him [referring to the president]. The Chief of the General Staff turned to the Special Operation Forces and said that they should leave me alone. When the president left, the Special Operation Forces were back. I saw a journalist from Anadolu News Agency (AA) leaving by a van and I begged him to

take me with them. I was afraid that they [the Special Operation Forces] would kill me. The reporter of AA did not take me in the van. So the Special Operation Forces got me, took me to the station and beat me. (Imral 2012)

In 1992 Izzet Kezer, a reporter from the daily *Sabah* was in Cizre for the Kurdish new year Newroz¹⁹, and was shot dead by the paramilitaries in front of other journalists from *Hürriyet*, *Sabah* and many others including the international press (Balıkçı 2012). *Sabah* did not even mention his death (Bayram 2011). One of my interviewees working at *Sabah* at the time notes:

Izzet Kezer was killed in the southeast while following the news on the armed conflict. At the time he was working for the newspaper informally [not on Act 212 or Act 1475]. No one knew him [in the newspaper]. But they [the media elites of the newspaper] came to his funeral. Güngör Mengi [the lead writer of the newspaper] gave a speech; “he was like a bullet.” etc. etc. They had not taken notice of him until that moment. They weren’t even paying the minimum wage.

For younger journalists in the mainstream insisting on critical news-making often meant immediate dismissal:

It was 1996, the years when unsolved murders, Hizbullah and Jitem (Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele, Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organization) [a controversial wing of the Gendarmerie which is alleged to be an embodiment of the deep state] executions were at the peak. I was 23 years old at the time. Our newspaper was new and not even its name was clear yet. I went to

¹⁹ After the 1980s, the Turkish state associated Newroz with the attempts to express and resurrect Kurdish identity and therefore banned it many times.

the southeast as a reporter of the newspaper. I had nothing that documented that I was a journalist. I clearly did not have a press card either. No one would work on 212 at that time. I was a journalist for only one year. They wrote on a paper that I was working for the Doğan Media Group. Well anyone could have faked that letterhead! Now I think I was really courageous. This is a time when journalists, who could actually prove that they were journalists, were killed. ... During one of my visits to Mardin [a city in the region], Derik, I came across to a news about an unsolved killing I met the family of the victim, went to his village and talked to his wife. I also talked to the witnesses of the moment, in which he was forcibly lost, and to those who saw him under custody. Then I found the major who was alledged to have forcibly lost the victim. He was in another city and I also talked to him. I had recorded the interview. He threatened me, noting that it would not be good for me. That news never made to the newspaper, and I was dismissed from Radikal for not being fit to the general profile in the building of the newspaper. ... I was actually dismissed directly by the orders that came from the state: "She's not going to work there!" I know that the managers at the time put a lot of effort into keeping me at Radikal. But the orders were probably strict. At the time, anyone who was disliked by the military experienced what I have experienced. Thinking about the killings or deaths, I think I was one of the lucky.

Except for the state controlled news and a few attempts in the mainstream media, the conflict was primarily covered by *Cumhuriyet* in the west of the country and by *Özgür Gündem* in the southeast. *Cumhuriyet* was one of the newspapers that did not change hands and move to a business conglomeration. According to an experienced journalist who worked

at *Cumhuriyet* at the time addressing the conflict even at *Cumhuriyet* was an issue. He explains what it meant to report on the details of the conflict for the western audience:

When we first heard that peasants in the region were forced [by the officers] to eat feces, I was thinking how I could get this published. ... I thought that it probably would not get published. Imagine, Cumhuriyet was at the time the newspaper that gave the widest coverage for such news. ... So I wrote the story but I hid the part on the feces to the end of the story. The headline was a discrete torture story. That's how I sent it to the newspaper. The editors caught it [the part on feces] and cut that part out. The next day the story appeared in the newspaper but without the part on the feces. I attempted to resign. Hasan Cemal [the editor in chief at the time] said he would carry this story to the headline if I were to go back to the village and rewrite the story. I went back while the district governor [Kaymakam in Turkish] kept warning that we would get killed [if we were to make this story into news]. That's how the story made to the headlines.

Özgür Gündem, on the other hand, was not part of the mainstream media. The news published by *Özgür Gündem* constituted a problem for the government, and more importantly for the military. At the meetings of the MGK, among all other issues the Kurdish media and *Özgür Gündem* would be discussed. In this context, on 30 November 1994, a secret memorandum was published with a decree signed by the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller. It declared that *Özgür Ülke* (the name of the same newspaper between 1994 and 1995 – given that courts regularly issued bans on the newspaper, the newspaper kept changing names) was working against the indivisibility of the state and the nation, the legal means to prevent it from publication would take too much time and it would have to be warded off as

soon as possible. This memorandum was sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to the General Directorate of Security Affairs, and to the General Commandership of the Gendarmerie (Çetin 2012). The newspaper's Istanbul office was bombed a few days after this memorandum (Akın 2014a).

February 28 Process

The “February 28 Process” refers to the 1997 military memorandum issued by the Turkish military on the MGK meeting on 28 February 1997 and the political developments that followed the memorandum. On the 12th of January in 1997 the then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) invited the leaders of Islamic sects to an iftar dinner²⁰ at the residence of the prime minister. 51 turbaned and cloaked leaders were invited. This became a big public scandal. It was the first time in the history of the Republic that the prime minister of the secular Turkish state organized such a provocative dinner at the prime minister's residency. A few weeks later, on the 3rd of February the municipality of Sincan in Ankara organized the Jerusalem Night. A tent that looked like al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was established at the center of the district and the ambassador of Iran was invited. Pictures of the leaders of Hamas and Hizbullah were hung in the tent. This also attracted a lot of attention.

The next day a military tank entered the district. The Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff claimed that they “balanced democracy” at Sincan. The Prime Minister Erbakan, claimed that they were in concert with the military. On the 28th of February, during the meeting of MGK, General Secretary of the Military responded that the military was in

²⁰ Iftar dinner is the evening meal when Muslims end their Ramadan fast with the call to prayer at the sunset.

concert with those who believed in Atatürk. Overall, the memorandum initiated the process that led to the resignation of the Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party, the end of his coalition government and the dissolution of the party in the following year on the grounds of acting against the principle of secularism.

During this period, the Turkish mainstream media acted with the military. Examples of the headlines of major newspapers during the February 28 Process included: “New Era” (*Sabah*, 2 March 1997), “The Response to the Hodja” (*Sabah*, 3 March 1997), “The Name of the Threat is Reactionarism” (*Milliyet*, 30 April 1997), “The End of Hodja’s Era” (*Sabah*, 19 June 1997), “Got its lumps!” (*Hürriyet*, 29 June 1997). In this period, some newspaper representatives in Ankara would visit the office of the Chief of the Staff and transmit the Chief of the Staff’s messages to the chief editors that they would not violate the boundaries drawn by the military. Dinç Bilgin (2008), who owned the Sabah Group, the second biggest media conglomeration of the 1990s, claimed that he lost editorial control of his newspaper during the February 28 Process. He added that during the process he once was invited to the Chief of the General Staff, that they told him about their complaints on *Sabah* and that he tried to defend the newspaper as much as he could (Bianet 2012). Aydın Doğan noted:

As the Doğan Group, starting with 1996 we envisaged one thing: We did not want to give up on the principles of the Republic. We were living like westerners and we would continue to live like that. But we saw during the Refah-Yol coalition government [referring to Erbakan’s prime ministry] that Turkey was step by step going away from democracy toward totalitarianism. We started reacting against this course. (Karaca 2015, 175)

In 1998, 10 months after the resignation of the prime minister, alleged records of investigation of a captured senior manager of the PKK, Şemdin Sakık, were published in *Hürriyet* and *Sabah* newspapers, and were broadcasted on *Kanal D*²¹. Accordingly, Sakık had given the names of a number of journalists and civil society actors who allegedly collaborated with the PKK or supported reactionism. Those journalists lost their jobs mainstream media jobs and the president of the Turkish Human Rights Association was severely injured in an assassination attempt. Mehmet Ali Birand, who was working at *Sabah* at the time and was accused of collaborating with the PKK, later explained:

When Nazlı Ilıcak published the document [which showed that these allegations were all part of a psychological war waged by the military -- the military later accepted the existence of this document] in her column, I couldn't believe in it. I couldn't think that the Turkish Armed Forces can make a lie part of a written document. When there was no [official] refutation, I felt extremely alone. ... That's when I felt how brutal and cruel the state was. Everyone leaves you. No one asks if it is true or not. That was the toughest period of my life. I was fired from Sabah newspaper. Özkasnak Pasha called Erol Aksoy [the owner of the Tv Channel] and threatened him to discontinue with the broadcasting of 32. Gün [Birand's TV Show] on Show TV. They wanted to wipe me off because my views were not congruent with the state's and the military's official policy on the Kurds. ... In the funeral of a martyr in Eskişehir a commissioned officer used my name and Cengiz Çandar's [another journalist on the list] name and said:

²¹ Cengiz Çandar, one of the journalists whose name was included in the alleged record of investigation, notes that Ufuk Güldemir from *Milliyet* had once told him that the document was first sent to him but he had resisted and not published it (Bianet 2012a).

“These traitors should be extinguished.” I then sent a fax to the Office of the Commander in Chief. I said: “An officer under your command is threatening my life. He should either take his words back or you should declare that this is not the case.” Erol Özkasnak Pasha called me in return and he said: “Who are you to dare to fax my Commander in Chief.” I responded: “Who are you to tell me this” and I hung up and I broke the phone by throwing it on the wall. My son was at Koç Highschool at the time. An evening, he came and asked “Dad, you take money from the PKK and write [for their interests], is that right?” This was a really hurtful incident for me. Could there be a bigger punishment than that? (Ö. Uğur 2011)

Other journalists such as Ahmet Altan were tried at the State Security Court for writing columns that asked the military to get back to its barracks and not to intervene in the political process. Ismet Berkan, who was *Radikal*’s Ankara representative at the time, notes that they all are guilty with regard to the February 28 Process because *“the mainstream media almost voluntarily became part of the psychological operation.”* (Bianet 2012).

During the February 28 Process, much like the mainstream media, the Gülenist *Zaman* newspaper sided with the military. One headline it ran was: “Erbakan has aged” (“Erbakan Yaş’landı” in Turkish). This also meant Erbakan was exposed to MGK and also Erbakan was in tears. The newspaper also published pictures of Fethullah Gülen, the clerical leader of the Gülen movement, with a picture of Atatürk hanging on his wall. This implied that both the movement and the newspaper were loyal to Atatürk’s legacy. A journalist, also a follower of the Gülen movement recalls the changes at *Zaman*:

We came to the newspaper on February 28 and we saw that the administrative management was changed. We said who is responsible for this! Not many people knew the new chief editor. ... We were also excluded from the events at public institutions. This is what we call accreditation. Zaman was the first to experience accreditation. ... Another means of pressure [on Zaman] was financial. Those who were advertising [in the newspaper] could not advertise. They were labeled as “green capital” and there were efforts to make them go bankrupt. At the very least, they were excluded from the venues of public spending. ... In addition, we were affected through our readership. Reading Zaman turned into reading an underground organizations’ bulletin. ... The readers had to hide that they were reading Zaman.

He adds that as a person who did not like the pacifist editorial stance of the newspaper at the time he had a “schizophrenic” experience:

I remember myself as a person who could not internalize the passive editorial line of Zaman. I thought that Zaman should have been more democrat, more radical democrat, saying things as they are -- independent of their consequences. I also thought that Zaman should have been more protective of the victims of the period. ... One day we had a discussion at the newspaper. The veiled kids were excluded from the university. But the chief editor of the day said, “We shouldn’t write about these. If we do, they will make a target of us and who knows what they will do”. For just or unjust reasons he chose to ignore. Despite all my efforts in the newspaper we were not able to reflect on the drama at the universities. The next day, I was with my wife, who is also veiled. Veiled girls had a desk at Üsküdar to

attract subscribers to Zaman newspaper. I said to myself, “you [referring to the girls] probably are university students, you couldn’t go to university and that’s why you have the time to be here. Because you have the time you are trying to attract subscribers to Zaman and this newspaper does not care about you”. This was the dilemma. It was a schizophrenic emotion. Those who protected Zaman were the victims of that despotic, anti-democratic, unlawful order, and you are silent in the face of the tragedy that distorts the psychology and destroys the social relationships of those victims.... So we followed a pacifist line [during the February 28 Process]. It meant remaining silent in the face of your own mass victimization to prevent the rise of bigger problems.

Conclusion

Turkey entered the 2000s with weak governments, a strong military hand in politics, strong business conglomerates and weak journalists. The relationships among these actors allowed for news-making on topics of disagreement among varying media outlets. For instance, news on corruption would be revealed, if not by all newspapers, definitely by a major outlet in the journalistic field. Pressure was severe on topics of agreement. In addition to the reporting on the armed conflict between the military and the PKK, and the February 28 Process, in the late 1990s and the early 2000s broadcast bans by the State Security Courts on issues such as the death fasts in the prisons became ordinary. In 2001, in a press meeting in Ankara, TGS claimed: “We don’t think journalists can tolerate enduring these conditions for another 10 years.”

The history, however, has shown that journalists would have to endure the conditions for many more years. In 2001, Turkey experienced one of the biggest economic crises of its history. In the first six months of the crisis 600-700 thousand jobs were lost while 75 thousand workplaces were shut down (Tılıç 2001, 13). Along with other sectors, the media also encountered a big unemployment crisis. In the January and February of 2001 alone, 3000 journalists lost their jobs (Topuz 2003). Dismissals continued over 2002. In Doğan Media Group 5,350 people were working at the time, and 1000 of them lost their jobs in 2002 (Topuz 2003, 337). In this atmosphere even pregnant women were sacked despite laws that protected pregnant women from dismissals (Tılıç 2001). The motives behind the dismissals were not solely economic (Tılıç 2001, 17). Those who challenged the corruption in bureaucracy and politics were chosen as victims. According to Tılıç, this has further transformed journalists forcing them to become more conformist towards authority (Tılıç 2001). In Weber's terms journalists became professionally more submissive in the face of helplessness because there were no acceptable alternatives.

Moreover, the political identities that defined the field of journalism and affected the course of events over the 2000s were shaped in the relationships among the state, the media owners and the journalists. Being close witnesses to human rights violations as well as experiencing severe state pressure during the 1980 coup d'état, the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces and the 28 February Process, journalists' ideas about who to side with, where to work at, and with whom to stand in solidarity took on a new form. For instance, journalists who lost their jobs during the February 28 Process were in the coming era reluctant to stand in solidarity with the mainstream media. Similarly, rent seeking

alliances between the state and media owners prevented those who experienced the armed conflict in the southeast from sympathizing with the mainstream media.

Overall, the media of the late 2000s grew out of the relationships, identities and practices instituted over the 1990s and the crisis of journalism encountered at the beginning of the 2000s. Both the material conditions that journalists found themselves in and the political identities that were shaped through crisis periods of the 1980s and the 1990s prepared the ground for the state of journalism in the 2000s.

In the next two chapters, I describe how the power hierarchies in politics and hence in the field of journalism were disturbed after 2002 with the rise of the AKP to political power, before delving later into a discussion of how such destabilization led to the domination of the rising powerholders over the media.

CHAPTER 3

DESTABILIZATION OF POWER HIERARCHIES IN POLITICS, 2002 – 2013

The newly established AKP rose to power in an unconsolidated democracy where particularly the president, the military and the judiciary acted as veto-players, wielding tutelary powers over elected officials (Esen & Gümüşçü 2016). In the elections of 2002, it received 34,3 percent of the votes. Its electoral success was a first in Turkish history in that a party with a political Islamist background was for the first time not prevented from consolidating its position in the political process by the secularist state institutions that acted as veto-players. In the next two general elections, respectively in 2007 and 2011, the party further increased its share of votes (see Table 2.). Winning three elections in a row, by 2011 it had turned into a dominant party (Çarkoğlu 2011) and much of this was accomplished by skewing the political playing field for the competitors to its own advantage (Esen & Gümüşçü 2016).

Table 2. Turkish General Elections (2002-2015)

Elections		AKP		CHP		MHP		DEHAP*	
Years	Turnout in %	Vote in %	Seats in %	Vote in %	Seats in %	Vote in %	Seats in %	Vote in %	Seats in %
2002	79,14	34,29	66	19,38	32,4	8,35	0	6,23	0
2007	84,25	46,58	62	20,88	20,4	14,27	12,9	5,24	4,7
2011	83,16	49,83	59,5	25,98	24,5	13,01	9,6	6,57	6,4
2015	83,92	40,87	46,9	24,95	24	16,29	14,5	13,12	14,5

* DEHAP is the name of the Kurdish party that entered the 2002 elections. Given the party was then dissolved and the Kurds entered the 2007 and the 2011 elections with independent candidates to overcome the 10% parliamentary threshold, the percentages of vote and seats for 2007 and 2011 indicate the percentages for all independents. The percentages for the year 2015 indicate the vote and parliamentary shares of the HDP, the Kurdish party.

I call this process, in which the power balance between the AKP and the secularist veto-players was skewed to the disadvantage of the secularist veto-players, as “the destabilization of power hierarchies”. Theoretically, destabilization corresponds to a state in which a stable form of inequality (social structure) has not yet disintegrated but is about to change into a new type of inequality. The AKP used a number of material and symbolic methods to redistribute power to achieve such destabilization. In this chapter, I address these forms of intervention, before delving into a discussion in the following chapter of how the redistribution of power in politics has disturbed the power distribution in the field of journalism.

The chapter is organized into two sections followed by a conclusion. The key point of the first section is that during its initial period in rule, the AKP promoted a relatively inclusive definition of the nation, presented itself as a political actor in concert with existing state-society relations and promoted social change within the bounds of reforms prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Union (EU). In this period, the prerogatives of the secularist veto-players in politics were limited by the IMF and the EU reforms. While these veto-players were implied to be the enemies of the nation in the party’s discourses of nation, democracy and social change, they were not acted upon through exclusionary state practices that fell outside the bounds of the IMF and the EU reforms. Against this backdrop, between 2002 and 2007 relationships between the AKP government, businessmen owners of media outlets and journalists were mostly a continuation of the relationships in the previous era.

The second section of the chapter demonstrates that the hierarchies of power in politics were disturbed after 2007 to the advantage of the AKP as opponents and proponents

came to be differentiated from one another through political trials and the accompanying discourse of punishment and purge of the enemies of the nation. These trials were of an unforeseen scale in the recent history of the Turkish Republic and destabilized the power hierarchies in politics by placing the secularist veto-players in the defendant's seat both in the courtroom and in the minds of a significant segment of the population.

Democracy, Unity and Consensus-Building

The leader and the front bench of the AKP had started their political careers in the 1970s in the political Islamist National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) movement. The National Outlook movement designated the Sunni-Muslim identity and the Ottoman legacy as core elements of the nation and advocated an anti-capitalist anti-western national economy (Saraçoğlu & Demirkol 2015). The founders of the AKP split from this movement in pursuit of reform in the movement's economic program, when the Constitutional Court banned the political Islamist Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP) from politics for its anti-secular and anti-republican activities in 2002 (Kalaycıoğlu 2010).

At its foundation, the AKP included a coalition of politicians such as the front bench from the National Outlook tradition, those from the Gülen movement and the center-right ANAP. The AKP portrayed itself as a moderately religious party that produced centrist policies -- the counterpart of the European conservative parties and a descendant of the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) of the 1950s. It praised secularism as a prerequisite for democracy and stressed its commitment to the goals set by the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Altınordu 2016). With this understanding, during its first electoral term, the party identified democracy with the will of the nation, and described itself as the

agent for the realization of this will. The speech by the leader of the party, Tayyip Erdoğan, held on the election night in November 2002 presents an illustration:

You voted for the steps to be taken first in work, food and bread [related matters] and second in education, health, fundamental rights and freedoms. You voted for democracy to work properly. You voted for a transition from a democracy that was incapable of government to a democracy that governs. You voted for reaching the virtue of living like a human being. You desired these and you pointed at the AKP as the address [for the realization of these goals]. The decision is yours. You performed what Atatürk has claimed, “Sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the nation.” (Radikal 2002)

In these narratives, the nation was claimed to embrace all citizens, who come from various ethnic backgrounds and inhabit the territories of Turkey:

The problems [in this country] cannot be differentiated on the basis of the groups they belong to. All problems, be they Turkish, Kurdish, Circassian, Abhaz or Laz are common problems of the citizens of the Turkish Republic. This is because the sun heats everyone, because the rain is benediction for all, because everyone belongs to the same territory, because we all belong to the same territory. This is what it means to be a nation (Bianet 2005).

Such definition of nation lacked reference to non-Muslim and non-Sunni citizens of Turkey and the lack thereof attributed an explicit role to Muslimhood, in particular to Sunni-Muslim values, in determining the identity and the scope of the nation. Nevertheless, during the AKP's first electoral term the explicit emphasis was on the unity of all and how this unity

would be maintained. Through the idea of citizenship, the Turkish state was pointed as a guarantee for the unity of the nation:

The citizenship of Turkish Republic is the insurance for the 73 million [people], [it is] a guarantee sufficient for us all. It is this supra-identity of ours that keeps us, the Kurd, the Laz and the Turk, the easterner, the westerner, the southerner and the northerner, the believer and the non-believer, all united. ... Constitutional citizenship is the common force for all of us who live in this country. No one should try to divide or crumble this force. One should ask herself/himself, how much do we protect this country, what do we contribute to this country, to what extent am I attached to the unity, integrity, common values and the history which has flown from the same riverbed for centuries. This is what will determine Turkey's future. We should not forget that we are a mosaic. This mosaic is made of parts with properties that differ from one another. The parts make up its force. If one part of this mosaic is left aside, that wealth cannot be reached. Yet, if you integrate them with a supra-identity, which is the citizenship of Turkish Republic, then you reach it (Erdoğan 2005).

Aside from constitutional citizenship, all state projects were framed as a means of uniting the nation. The AKP as the governor of these projects was presented as a guarantee for unity:

While there is such a deep cliff between various regions in income distribution, health, education, development; while the gap between the regions is so big in terms of infrastructure, how are we going to talk of a common ideal of future? Without the state completing everything that it had left incomplete, without

reaching the hand of affection to every inch of Turkey's soil, we cannot progress.

This is what the AK Party government currently succeeds in (Erdoğan 2005).

In their narratives, AKP politicians would highlight social contract (*toplumsal mutabakat* in Turkish) and consensus-building as the mechanisms by which the party would unite the nation. They would frame the party's attitude towards the solution of even the most controversial issues in this discourse. For instance, in 2004, Erdoğan, in his response to a question on their policy of the religious vocational high schools (*Imam-Hatip Liseleri*, IHL)²², over which the Islamists and the secularists had long been divided, noted:

I am trying to demonstrate that this issue is not only about the religious vocational high schools. Yet, I do not get the support that I expect. So, I believe it is more beneficial to leave this issue to time. In my country, my wish is this:

²² In Turkey, the 1924 Law of Unification of Educational Instruction (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) replaced all existing modes of education, including the religious schools, with a unified secular and centralist education system. Thenceforth opening and closure of special schools for training imams and preachers (*Imam Hatip Lisesi*, IHL), and whether the graduates of these schools would be allowed to enter university have been issues of political controversy. The debate over the IHLs is closely tied to the headscarf debate. The constitutional principle of secularism in Turkey traditionally banned women who wear headscarves from working in the public sector. As the number of university students who wear headscarves increased substantially after the mid 1970s, wearing a headscarf at universities turned into a matter of controversy. At this time, the IHLs had grown in number and had come to accept female students. At the IHLs, as opposed to regular schools, female students would be able to wear headscarves. Graduates of these schools then gained access to university education. The first widespread application of the headscarf ban came into effect at the universities in 1984 in this context. Later, during the February 28 Process the ability of IHL graduates to enter regular universities was restricted and they were channeled to theology schools while education at IHLs was limited to three years. When the AKP, a great many of whose members are graduates of IHLs, came to power, its religious supporters expected the party to take steps on these two issues by releasing the restrictions on both the wearing of headscarf at universities and the entry of IHL graduates to regular universities.

Reaching the social contract. I believe I will reach social contract in time
(Milliyet 2004)²³.

In many occasions, he would also note that individual rights and liberties would provide the ground for such consensus²⁴. Overall, the party identified democracy with the will of the nation. During its initial term it described the spirit of its rule in reference to the goal of democracy, the realization of the will of nation, and consensus building among the members of the nation through party projects. This discourse aligned well with the structural changes that marked the era.

The Spirit of the Rule, the IMF Program of Recovery and the EU Reforms

The AKP's first electoral term was an era of fundamental reform. The coalition government of the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP), Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) and ANAP had initiated the IMF program of recovery and the EU accession reforms between 1999 and 2002 in the context of Turkey's official recognition as a candidate for full membership to EU at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 and the economic crisis of 2001 that collapsed the Turkish banking system and left nearly a million people unemployed²⁵.

²³ Similarly, in 2002, Erdoğan responded to a question on their policy of the headscarf ban by noting, "Whatever problems we have, we will solve them in social contract, without causing any tensions, so we will not jump the gun" (Hürriyet 2002b).

²⁴ "If we are for freedoms, if we defend freedoms, then it is wrong to say I accept these freedoms but not these others. This mentality is wrong." (CNNTürk 2005)

²⁵ The chronic fiscal deficits and high rates of inflation in the Turkish economy of the late 1990s led to the signing of a stand-by agreement with the IMF in 1999. The agreement aimed at fiscal adjustment and medium-term structural reforms. Nevertheless, two years later, in 2001, the Turkish economy experienced a crisis, the biggest in its history. The crisis primarily originated from disequilibrium in the banking sector, which was suffering from a high degree of politicization and rent-seeking both in lending and regulation (licensing and supervision of banks). As a consequence of the crisis the GNP in real terms declined by 9.4

By the time the AKP rose to power in 2002, Turkey had already made the promise to implement the IMF prescribed cuts on public spending, control over wages, limits on agricultural support and privatization of state-owned enterprises in return for US \$19 billion to be provided over the course of three years (Öniş & Bakır 2010). The EU Council, on the other hand, had declared, that conditional upon Turkey's fulfillment of political criteria it would determine in December 2004 whether and when to open accession talks with Turkey (Tocci 2014). Against this backdrop, during its first electoral term, the AKP government strictly adhered to the prescriptions of the two structural reform programs.

In the implementation of the IMF recovery program, fiscal austerity and privatization were prioritized (Öniş & Bakır 2007). Through the reforms, a record number of state-owned enterprises including the natural monopolies were privatized²⁶, incentives for foreign investment such as high real interest rates -- one of the highest among emerging markets -- were created and labor laws that favored foreign and domestic employers were enforced. These changes brought about a strong surge in economic growth²⁷ and a stabilization of

percent and real GDP contracted by 7.5 percent in 2001. In addition, per capita income dropped from \$2,986 to \$2,110 per annum, unemployment reached 1 million people, inflation was realized at 68.5 percent, the Turkish Lira depreciated by 115.3 percent against the US dollar, and interest rates on government securities averaged 96.2 percent. Small and medium sized businesses were also severely affected by the crisis that resulted in widespread bankruptcies and layoffs (Öniş 2003, Öniş & Bakır 2007, Öniş & Bakır 2010).

²⁶ The revenues collected from privatization between 1984 and 2001 amounted to a total of US \$8,4 billion, of which US \$2,7 billion was generated in 2000. The boom in privatization occurred after 2001, and mainly after 2004. In 2004, the revenues amounted to US \$1,266 billion, in 2005 to US \$8,209 billion, in 2006 to US \$8,094 billion and in 2007 to US \$4,259 billion (Özelleştirme İdaresi Başkanlığı 2016).

²⁷ Turkey's growth rate in real GNP reached 9.9 percent in 2004. Here I should note that Turkish economic growth also became dependent on sharp increases in household debt. Consumer loans, such as housing and vehicle loans, and credit card loans rather than business loans have emerged as the key growth areas in the post-crisis financialization. See Öniş & Bakır 2010 for more detail.

inflation at single-digit levels – for the first time in three decades -- along with a striking increase in market concentration, a massive jump in the flow of FDI, an erosion of domestic savings, an increase in the reliance on foreign capital and a failure to reduce unemployment rates (Öniş & Bakır 2010).

In this context, Turkey granted greater independence to its Central Bank, nationalized and rehabilitated insolvent banks, and restructured its state banks (Öniş & Bakır 2010). The Bank Regulatory and Supervisory Agency (*Bankacılık Düzenleme ve Denetleme Kurulu*, BDDK), established in 1999 following the ratification of the IMF-sponsored Banking Act, has revoked licenses of dozens of banks. This brought down these banks' parent conglomerates as well. The bankrupt conglomerates and their assets were taken into receivership by another state agency, the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (*Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu*, TMSF), to be sold off in return for their debts (Yeşil 2016). Between 2000 and 2003, fourteen banks were taken over by the TMSF, with the total number of the TMSF banks reaching twenty-two (Öniş & Bakır 2010)²⁸. Over this process, while politicians and bank owners were sent to courts to stand trial over corruption charges, TMSF emerged as a crucial actor with the power to re-allocate the seized assets.

The EU accession reforms, many of which were passed by the coalition government of 1999-2002 before the November 2002 elections, on the other hand, curbed the power of the secularist veto-players in politics and loosened restrictions on the civil and cultural rights of previously disenfranchised groups, particularly the Kurds and the Islamists (Esen &

²⁸ Examples of the influential and fast growing holding companies of the 1990s which owned major banks and were eliminated over this process include Uzan family, Cavit Çağlar, Dinç Bilgin and Murat Demirel, nephew of former Prime Minister and State President Süleyman Demirel (Karadağ 2010).

Gümüşçü 2016). In this context, the influence of the military in councils overseeing the activities of the parliament, universities and the media was diminished as the number of civilian members in National Security Council (MGK) were increased, the frequency of MGK meetings was reduced, and the decisions made by the MGK council were downgraded to the level of recommendations for the government. The EMASYA protocol, which allowed the military authorities to bypass civilian authorities in responding to social incidents, was annulled, and the composition of YÖK and RTÜK, the institutions that oversee the activities of the universities and the media, were altered (Esen & Gümüşçü 2016). In addition, the ban on Kurdish education was lifted in 2002 on the condition that doing so would not threaten the indivisible integrity of the state and would be permitted only in private language schools. Broadcasting in languages other than Turkish was allowed in 2004 (Yeşil 2016).

From the time of their creation by the coalition government of 1999-2002, the two reform processes were presented as complementary means of democratization and development. In their implementation, the coalition government strove to secure societal co-operation and consensus building on the basis of a “desire for reform” shared by all segments of the society (Hürriyet 2001). When Kemal Derviş, who had a distinguished career at the World Bank (WB) and was appointed in the post crisis period as the minister responsible for the treasury to administer the governments’ relations with the IMF and the WB, presented the IMF program to the public, the stress was on the national character of the program as opposed to claims of foreign intervention:

The constituted program will be Turkey’s national program. We will look for support from the IMF, the WB, Europe and many others. We are trying to close a deal with the IMF but the program is our program. Turkey has very valuable

experts who are educated and can respectfully work at any institution in the world. I am proud about this. (Hürriyet 2001)

In fact, even Derviş's own nationality had provided the IMF program with a legitimacy that would have been missing had it been portrayed simply as an externally imposed set of disciplines (Öniş & Bakır 2007).

When the AKP came to power, tied hand and foot with the two structural reform processes, it appropriated these discourses on democratization and development, cooperation and shared desire for reform, and national strength, and adopted them to its own language. Specifically, it asserted that the political and economic reforms were the means of democratization and development, of building trust between the state and the society, and of securing a social contract among the various parts that make up the nation. The shared desire for reform and national strength were in this context replaced with the discourse of the will of the nation. The party's narratives differed from the ones in the previous era in one significant respect: the AKP was now depicted as the authentic agent of social change. Its implementation of the reforms was now presented as power to realize the will of the nation.

Erdoğan noted in 2002 that via the political and economic reforms the party was going to create a Turkey that “maintained economic stability”, “formed a competitive market structure”, “caught up with an atmosphere of sustainable development”, “is able to fairly distribute the benefits of these as to eliminate poverty and make the free and prosperous people live in peace”, “is integrated into the world”, “where difference is a source of wealth and not of clash”, “honorable, and democratic where east and west can live together”, and “is capable of contributing to the formation of a new world.” (Hürriyet 2002b). A year later, Erdoğan also noted:

The legislative changes are not undertaken to solely fulfill the EU criteria but are also a sign of our governments' dedication to bring our democracy to a level deserved by our people. (Erdoğan 2003)

This claim on being the authentic agent of social change and realizing the will of the nation, when coupled with the time difference of passing a law and observing its results of implementation, made it possible for the AKP to take credit for changes initiated in the earlier period, and to present itself as the solver of problems in Turkey.

The AKP's policy on the Kurdish issue between 2002 and 2007 presents an example. The EU reforms passed by the coalition government shortly before the 2002 general elections had lifted the state of emergency in Kurdish provinces. The state of emergency had been in place since the 1980 military intervention. The legal changes made in 2002 led to a significant reduction in the level of armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces, and improved the legal framework for Kurdish education and broadcasting. However, these reforms created a sense of normalization only in the mid 2000s (Öktem 2008). In 2005, when the Prime Minister Erdoğan recognized the ethnic aspect of the Kurdish issue in one of his speeches, it was this sense of normalization wrapped in a discourse of democratization and realization of the will of the nation that allowed him to present the AKP as capable of leading a new politics of recognition on the Kurdish question.

In these discourses, where the AKP was depicted as the agent of democratizing social change, the critics of its rule, in particular the secularist state institutions that previously stalled the political activities of the Islamists and the Kurds were addressed as opponents of democracy, elements of the past and doomed to extinction to the extent they were resistant to

the nation's democratic will. For instance, in the speech where Erdoğan recognized the ethnic aspect of the Kurdish question he noted the following:

When I was jailed for reading a poem [he was jailed in 1999 for inciting hatred based on religious differences by reading a poem], I sent my nation the following message from the jail: I am by no means angry or resentful to my state. This state, this flag, this homeland belongs to us all. I said: Some day these mistakes will be corrected. ... Those who do not respect thought cannot talk of freedom of thought. Those who do not respect freedom cannot talk of freedom. Those who do not respect the freedom of religion and conscience cannot talk of the freedom of religion and conscience. Those, who think like this, are doomed to melt down as a snowball under snow. (Bianet 2005)

The image of the AKP as the agent of democratization and development was also strengthened when the EU Council made the decision in December 2004 to actually inaugurate the negotiation process in October 2005, and Turkey managed to achieve a record growth rate in real GNP of 9.9 percent in 2004.

The Spirit of the Rule, the Reforms and the State of the Journalistic Field

As an effect of the political and economic reforms undertaken during the AKP's first electoral term, the power positions in the field of journalism underwent significant changes. In the context of TMSF's seizure of bankrupt conglomerates and their assets, including major newspapers and television and radio outlets, TMSF, turned into one of the largest media owners in the country. Between 2002 and 2006, TMSF had under its control three major dailies, three national television channels, and several radio stations (Yeşil 2016).

The fall of the Uzan group presents an illustration of the rise of TMSF as a prominent actor in the transfer of ownerships. The Uzan family owned a number of powerful media outlets in Turkey -- the daily *Star* most prominent among them -- along with Imarbank and the second largest GSM Company of the country, Telsim. The Uzan family was also in business with the cell phone manufacturer Motorola. The family group benefited from the privatization tenders in the 1990s. After the 2001 economic crisis, the family was investigated for mismanagement of their banks and not paying Motorola its share of billions of dollars of cellphones sold. In 2002, Cem Uzan of the Uzan family entered the elections as the president and the founder of the newly established *Genç Party*. His party attracted 7 percent of the vote and was left outside the parliament due to the 10 percent threshold. A year after the election, when the TMSF seized Çukurova and Kepez Electricity that belonged to the Uzan Family, *Star* newspaper ran the headline “your strength barely suffices to this, you prick”, referring to Erdoğan. Erdoğan sued the newspaper and in 2004, due to Imarbank’s debts 219 companies of the group along with the daily *Star* and *Star TV* were seized by the TMSF (Özvarış 2014).

The news assets seized by the TMSF during the AKP’s first electoral term were sold to both national and foreign investors. Among the national investors who bought these assets were secular as well as religious business circles²⁹. In 2005, Doğan Group and Ciner Group,

²⁹ I make this distinction based on Buğra and Savaşkan’s study (2014) of the relationship between religion, politics and business in contemporary Turkey. The study evinces that this distinction is most clearly illustrated by the difference between the Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği*, MÜSİAD) and the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TÜSİAD). Buğra and Savaşkan note that since its founding in 1990, MÜSİAD has defined itself in opposition to TÜSİAD, which is the more established and secular big business group. It emphasized the discrimination that conservative Muslims allegedly faced in a business environment

belonging to the former circle, respectively bought *Star TV*³⁰ for US \$305 million and *Sabah/ATV*, a joint television-newspaper outlet and the second-largest media conglomerate which previously belonged to the Karamehmet group³¹. In the same year, the Ipek-Koza group of the Gülen movement, belonging to the latter circle, acquired *Bugün* newspaper.

In the post-2004 privatization boom, privatization through capital markets was not the preferred option. Instead, for rapid results in revenue maximization a preference was made for block sales of leading public enterprises to major sector consortia. In this context, many of the major privatization deals were accomplished through strategic partnerships involving foreign and domestic investors (Öniş 2011). This was also the method pursued in the selling off of the media assets in the ownership of TMSF.

In 2005, CanWest, a Canadian company, bought shares of the leading radio stations *Super FM* and *Metro FM*, which had formerly been owned by Uzan family. CanWest was able to bypass the legal restriction that banned foreign investors from holding shares in more than one broadcasting company through a joint venture with a local company. Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp was another foreign investor that acquired *TGRT* in 2006, repackaging it a year later as an entertainment channel under the *Fox* brand. Other foreign investors

historically dominated by the secularist business establishment, and used religion as a network source to enhance the ties of trust between member companies of different sizes located in different sectors and regions and to keep them within the constituency of political Islam.

³⁰ Here I should note that Doğan Holding had to sell *Star TV* later. Aydın Doğan notes that they had to sell it because of the RTÜK law that restricted the ownership of multiple TV channels if the share of the company in the advertisement reached above 30 percent. Given that *Kanal D*—another channel owned by the Doğan Group-- and *Star TV*'s total shares in the advertisement market were about 38 percent, Doğan Group had to sell *Star TV* (Hakan 2012).

³¹ In 2007, a few months before the second election of the AKP, TMSF has seized *Sabah/ATV* based on criminal charges surrounding the earlier sale.

included Axel Sprigner, who bought 25 percent of Doğan Media shares, and Providence Equity Partners, which bought 47 percent of Digiturk, a company notable for creating Turkey’s first digital television platform (Yeşil 2016, 83-90).

These sales were made possible by the liberalization of the legal regime governing media ownership. In the past, ownership restrictions in the “Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises” had focused on share limits, whereby a company was allowed to establish only one radio and only one television station. A shareholder in any given station could not hold more than 20 percent of the shares and if he/she owned shares in several stations, the total ratio of his/her shares could not exceed 20 percent. The law also allowed limited cross-ownership between the newspaper and broadcasting sectors (Sözeri & Kurban 2011).

In 2002, at a time when the parliament was discussing amendments to the broadcasting regulation in the context of the EU accession reforms, the big media companies lobbied against these restrictions. As a result, with the 2002 amendments (Law no. 4756) in the broadcasting law, share ratios were introduced as the new measure for restrictions on ownership. Accordingly, if the average annual viewing or listening ratio of a television or a radio enterprise exceeded 20 percent, then the capital share of a real or legal person or a capital group in an enterprise should not exceed 50 percent. The highest ratio recorded at the time was 16 percent, indicating that the legal limit was too difficult to reach for any broadcasting company. The new amendment also removed the restrictions on cross

ownership and participation in public tenders and the stock market. Eventually, there remained no legal restrictions on media ownership (Sözeri & Kurban 2011)³².

The law was passed in 2002 after being vetoed by President Sezer on its first round. However, the Constitutional Court changed this legislative framework in 2004 cancelling two clauses on the grounds that they caused monopolization and violated the Constitution which tasks the state with the prevention of “the formation, in practice or by agreement, of monopolies and cartels in the markets,” as well as with guaranteeing respectively freedom of expression and freedom of press (Sözeri & Kurban 2011)³³.

In the context of the EU accession negotiations, a number of other legislative changes concerning were made. These aimed at extending the limits of freedom of expression in Turkey by limiting the power of the military over the media and increasing the public presence of ethnic and religious elements in the media. These included, the loosening of the restrictions on the Kurdish language in broadcasting, the ratification of a new press law which replaced the one in force since 1950 and the restructuring of the composition of RTÜK as to remove the member appointed by the MGK in 2004 (Çaylı & Depeli 2011). It is in this context that the state run *TRT* began to broadcast in Bosnian, Arabic, Circassian and two Kurdish dialects with limits imposed on duration and scope (Yeşil 2016).

³² A research commissioned by RTÜK showed that the 2002 amendments enabled a media company to own 244 local and regional and 30 (medium sized) national stations at the same time (Cankaya and Yamaner 2006).

³³ The former president of RTÜK who opposed the changes in the law noted that Erdoğan and Gül before the AKP’s rise to power told him that they were against the law and would support its annulment if they were to come to power (Önderoğlu 2008). In fact, many among the AKP MPs, who were previously in the parliament, were among those who applied to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of the law. See <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2006/08/20060804-23.htm> for the legal application document.

Overall, the fundamental changes in the field of journalism during the AKP's first electoral term included the transfer of the ownership of Uzan and Karamahmet groups' media outlets along with changes in the legal framework of media ownership. However, the transfer of ownerships did not imply a disturbance in favor of the religious businessmen. Secular business circles benefited from the tender sales at least as much as their religious counterparts. Given that media owners were running businesses in other sectors, access to privatization deals outside the media sector also affected the balance of power in the field of journalism. An imbalance towards religious business circles was not observed in these deals, either³⁴.

For or Against: The Secular Business Circles in Limbo

The AKP had come to power primarily as a representative of the Turkish conservative electorate. During its first electoral term, it emerged as a rigorous reformer. Through reforms that curbed the formal prerogatives of the secularist political veto-players, opened up greater space for elected officials in decision making, and signaled an

³⁴ Doğan Group and Doğu Group, two prominent secular business groups also active in the media, maintained access to privatization deals in this period. The privatization of Petrol Ofisi A.Ş (POAŞ), a company founded by the state to import, stock, refine and distribute petroleum products in 1941 and turned into a joint stock company in 1983, had started in 1998 and reached completion in 2002 with the sale of its last public share to Doğan Holding (Hürriyet 2002a). Three years later, Doğan Group bought all POAŞ shares belonging to İş Bank for US \$616 million and increased its percentage share to 88.36 percent and thereby took over complete control of the company (Adaklı 2009). Similarly, in 2005, Aydın Doğan bought the Hilton Hotel, the property ownership of which belonged to the Government Retirement Fund (*Emekli Sandığı*) with the highest bid of US \$255.5 million (Hürriyet 2005a). Doğu Holding opened the marine in Bodrum in 2003. Similarly, the Boyabat Dam and the Hydro-electric power plant, the negotiations over which had started in 1998, and the Artvin Dam and the Hydro-electric power plant, the negotiations over which had started in 1996, were both given to Doğu in 2007 with a license for 49 years of production. The bid for construction of the 5 km rail system in Istanbul (Otogar-Mahmutbey) was also given to Doğu in 2003 for US \$173 million and in 2006 this lane was extended to 22 km increasing the amount to US \$1, 137 million.

improvement in the legal framework of civil and cultural rights, the party sold hopes to previously disenfranchised groups such as the Kurds who always had a tense relationship not only with the secular nationalists but also with the nationalist Sunni AKP leadership. The discursive moves that recognized the ethnic aspect of the Kurdish issue and marked the AKP's difference from the secularist state actors helped in attracting support from the Kurds, particularly from their networks of Islamic sects and communities (Taşkın 2008).

The same reforms, however, increased the fears of the secularists that the AKP had a hidden agenda to undermine the secular identity of the state institutions. A significant portion of this secularist opposition to the AKP also held anti-privatization views since the 1990s³⁵. The moves of the party in the political process hence came to be closely monitored by the representatives of this secularist and anti-privatization opposition within the state establishment, namely President Sezer, the judiciary and the military (Karadağ 2010). The number of pieces of legislation that President Sezer sent back to parliament for reconsideration and referred for annulment to the Constitutional Court evinces the level of such monitoring. By the time he left office, he had vetoed a total of 62 pieces of legislation and blocked 447 executive appointments, more than double the amount of any of his

³⁵ Over the 1990s, there was a strong anti-privatization coalition in Turkey. Key members of this coalition included politicians, who did not want to give up the potential to use national enterprises for populist redistribution, managers and workers of existing state enterprises, elements within statist segments of the bureaucracy and political parties on the center-left of the political spectrum. The Constitutional Court emerged as a key institution in voicing the concerns of the anti-privatization lobbies and in blocking the path of major privatization deals during the course of the 1990s. After the economic crisis of 2001, opponents to privatization increasingly made a distinction between sales to 'national' versus 'foreign' capital and appeared to be more receptive to the sales to 'national capital' (Öniş 2011).

predecessors³⁶ (Ciddi 2011). Such monitoring at times went beyond legal review and amounted to refusals to allow AKP politicians whose wives wore headscarves to social events at the presidency or the office of the commander in chief³⁷.

In this context, the secular business circles in the ownership of mainstream media outlets, which had supported the ousting of the Islamist RP in the late 1990s on the grounds of acting against secularism, were torn between support for reforms that secured the inflow of FDI, provided them with access to privatization deals, and eliminated some of their rivals through corruption charges³⁸, and resistance to the entrenchment of an Islamist party within the secular state establishment. They claimed to choose to champion the AKP's policies to the extent that the party acted in compliance with media owners in business relationships and maintained the emphasis in its policies on secularism³⁹.

³⁶ Among these was the bill to abolish restrictions on the access of IHL students to universities as well as the bill to loosen restrictions on media concentration. Rigid secularists interpreted the bill to abolish restrictions on IHL students as a manifestation of the party's hidden Islamist agenda.

³⁷ President Sezer refused to invite AKP politicians whose wives wore headscarfs to a ball marking Turkish independence. He claimed to prevent the undermining of the separation of mosque and state in Turkey.

³⁸ An excerpt from Aydın Doğan's interview is an evidence of such support. Doğan notes that he told Erdoğan the following in person in 2006: "You are going very successful. Turkey is growing. Inflation is down. Turkey is economically very strong. The entire world has their eyes on us. If I were you, I'd be proud. In such a young age, God gave you this opportunity to achieve the success that Turkey hadn't achieved in years." (Milliyet 2009).

³⁹ Focusing on the early period of the AKP rule, Saka (2009) explained how for the first time in republican history a particular assemblage was formed in journalism in opposition to the rule of AKP. Accordingly, journalists had never adopted such an ideological stance against the civil authority before. He argues that except for the most liberal in the mainstream media and some others in the growing media power of pro-AKP press corps, all joined this ideological formation and acted as the guardians of the secularist order. While I agree with Saka on journalists' sensitivities towards the secular order, I disagree to the extent of the coalition. Many among the mainstream journalists took a middle stance to guarantee the continuation with liberal economic policies.

This stance was most clearly illustrated during a political crisis in 2007. When the AKP nominated Abdullah Gül, a prominent AKP politician, as its candidate for president in the presidential election of 2007, the military, the judiciary as well as their civil society networks mobilized to prevent the loss of their stronghold to a representative of political Islam (Altınordu 2016). The loss would be both material and symbolic in that Gül's wife, a veiled woman, would be the first first-lady with a veil if Gül were elected president.

The network of secularist civil society organizations organized massive rallies, the Republican Rallies, in various major cities, announcing that the regime was at stake. The slogans chanted at the rallies were critical of the party's economic and political acts: "The President of the Parliament, an enemy of Atatürk," "He stole our bread and bought a ship for his son," "Reactionism, religious-racist fascism shall not pass," "Turkey is laic and will remain laic". Moreover, the participants expressed their opposition to the secular business circles, which supported the AKP on economic grounds, with slogans such as "Buy Erdoğan Get Aydın Doğan for free". Following the rallies, the night before the first round of elections, the military issued a memorandum on its website claiming that the Turkish Armed Forces took a side in debates over presidential elections and was the absolute defender of secularism. After the first round of the election, where Gül had the majority of votes, the main opposition party applied to the Constitutional Court with an objection on procedural grounds⁴⁰ and the Constitutional Court canceled the elections, which led the country to early parliamentary elections in July 2007 and a new presidential election in August 2007.

⁴⁰ According to the procedural requirements for the appointment of the president as of 2007, any candidate receiving the support of two-thirds of parliament in either the first or second round of voting would be elected. If no candidate were to receive two-thirds of the vote, then in the third and, if necessary, fourth rounds of voting, any candidate that received a simple

In the process, the mainstream media, while criticizing the military intervention in the political process on the grounds of democracy, campaigned for secularism and highlighted the threats posed by the extremists within the AKP to Turkish laïcité. The column by Ertuğrul Özkök, the then chief editor of the daily *Hürriyet*, written in the wake of the military memorandum presents a declaration of this view:

as a person who still defends the February 28 Process, I think military interventions do not suit us. However, while I oppose this [military] warning from a democrat's perspective, unfortunately, I should admit that I share the concerns voiced by the military.

Özkök then invited the AKP to get rid of the radicals within the party – pointing explicitly at the president of the parliament of the time, Bülent Arınç -- if it wanted to settle into the political center as claimed in its initial program. He implied that they would support the party in the upcoming elections so long as it pursued a politics of the center (Özkök 2007). Later, shortly before the August elections, Özkök asked Abdullah Gül, who he said deserved to be the president, to kindly refuse being the next president for his country and noted that such refusal would be a sign of his chivalry. In his account, Gül's refusal would be a step towards reconciliation between polarized parties (Özkök 2007).

majority of votes would be elected. Given the AKP's share of parliamentary seats following the 2002 election, the party had sufficient support to have Gül elected by simple majority in the third round of voting under these rules. The opposition party in parliament, the CHP, faced with this reality decided to boycott the first round of voting in parliament, claiming that in the absence of their participation the vote would be invalid on the basis that presidential selection required a super quorum of at least two-thirds of deputies to participate in the vote. It is with this objection that the CHP applied to the Constitutional Court (Bali 2013). In the election only two parties entered the parliament as all others failed to reach the ten-percent electoral threshold.

Punishment and Purge

In the elections of July 2007, the AKP claimed victory and the AKP's candidate Abdullah Gül was elected president by the new parliament in August 2007. After 2007, while political competition continued at the electoral level, competition over policy making steadily declined. This was made possible by skewing the power balance to the advantage of the AKP and the disadvantage of its opponents. To disturb the power balance the government instrumentalized a number of methods of intervention but most clearly political trials.

Political trials were wrapped in a new discourse. The party retained the emphasis on the goal of democracy, realization of the will of the nation and the AKP's role as the agent of social change. However, the goal of democracy was now associated with granting rights and liberties as much as with the punishment and purge of the corrupt forces and terrorists. The nation, on the other hand, while still said to include all citizens of Turkey, was now defined against two political enemies: the secularist political front, which was claimed to have oppressed the will of the nation throughout republican history⁴¹, and the leftist Kurds, which were claimed to have worked to divide the unity and solidarity of the nation. These two enemies were matched respectively with the corrupt forces and the terrorists that needed to be punished and purged. In the process of differentiating the friends of the nation from the enemies of the nation, defining the enemies meant defining the friends. Here, the emphasis on religious brotherhood among the members of the nation increased as public expression of religiosity turned into a significant marker of membership to the nation.

⁴¹ The nation's will was often defined in reference to Sunni Islam. For example, Erdoğan has claimed multiple times that the nation remembers very well how mosques were closed, the call for prayer was silenced, the religious outfits were banned during the single party rule of the CHP in the 1930s and 40s (Radikal 2012).

Political Trials: Setting the Discourse of Punishment and Purge

Otto Kirchheimer (1961) defined political trials as a regime's attempt to incriminate its foe's public behavior to evict him from the political scene. In political trials court action is called upon to exert influence on the distribution of political power. Weapons of defamation, perjury and contempt are manipulated to bring disrepute upon the political foe. Kirchheimer notes that political trials put pressure on the regime's foes not only by procedures of legal punishment but also by creating a political imagery appropriate for present needs of the regime.

The AKP's second electoral term was a time when political trials such as the Ergenekon, Balyoz, the KCK and match-fixing trials were brought against the secularist, Kurdish and leftist political organizations as well as the politically and economically influential figures of the football world⁴². The pressure in these trials operated not only by incarceration of the suspects but also through the discourses that defined the nation's enemies and friends, and dominated public discussion around the trials.

Among these trials, the Ergenekon trial set the stage for a new discourse on the nation. The Ergenekon trial is the umbrella name for a series of high-profile trials where members of the alleged nationalist clandestine organization, Ergenekon⁴³, were accused of conspiring to overthrow the elected AKP government by staging a coup -- initially by spreading chaos and mayhem to pave the way for the coup (Hürriyet Daily News 2011a). The

⁴² In Turkey, football is so popular and its capital is so big that it is considered as part of the field of power where members of prominent clubs have entrenched relations with the holders of political power.

⁴³ The name "Ergenekon" originates from a mythical Central Asian valley where Turks are said to have been saved from annihilation by a wolf that led them past their enemies to freedom.

investigation started in June 2007 with the discovery of 27 hand grenades in a shanty house belonging to a retired noncommissioned officer, and the trial began in 2008. In the process, over 200 retired and on-duty military personnel -- including the former Chief of the General Staff and several former commanding officers --, civil society actors, scholars, journalists, businessmen and politicians were detained. The verdicts were announced five years later, on August 5, 2013. Ilker Başbuğ, the former Chief of the General Staff, and 18 others were given life sentences. Of the 256 other defendants 21 were not convicted (AlJazeera 2013a, The Economist 2013). In 2016, the Court of Cassation annulled all the verdicts in the case with a decision for re-trial.

The Balyoz (*Sledgehammer* in English) trial strengthened the discourse set by the Ergenekon trials. It started in 2010 and took its name from an alleged Turkish military coup plan, Balyoz, dating back to 2003 -- months after the 2002 election of the AKP. Military personnel including military commanders were accused of trying to destabilize the government with plans to bomb mosques and trigger a conflict with Greece by shooting down one of Turkey's own warplanes and planting bombs in Istanbul to pave the way for a military takeover. In 2012, prison terms were handed to more than 300 serving and retired army officers out of 365 who were on trial. In 2014 Turkey's Constitutional Court ruled that the trial had been flawed and upon the decision of the Constitutional Court the penal court announced its decision for retrial, acquitting all defendants (Reuters 2013, BBC 2015).

Ergenekon and Balyoz trials were followed by a sports corruption scandal in football. In March 2011, the parliament passed Law No. 6222, which aimed for regulation and rigorous investigation of illegal acts in sports (Irak 2014). Four months later, in July 2011, 61 individuals including the chairman of Fenerbahçe soccer club, one of the three giants of

Turkish football, and several football players were arrested in the context of an investigation about match fixing, incentive premium, bribery, organized crime and intimidation in Turkey's top two soccer leagues. The verdict was announced in the summer of 2012, and 48 of the 93 accused were sentenced. Many among the accused including the chairman of Fenerbahçe soccer club were given prison sentences. In 2014, a retrial demand was accepted. After the retrial process in 2015, the accused were cleared of all charges (The Guardian 2015).

Finally, the Kurdistan Communities Union (*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*, KCK)⁴⁴ trial targeted the Kurds and their political organizations with sensational mass detentions. The trial started in 2009. Arrests of politicians, mayors, local councillors, academics, journalists, trade unionists, and lawyers followed throughout 2010 and 2011, at the end reaching the number of some 8,000 suspects. In these trials, Turkish authorities claimed that the police action targeted the PKK's underground network of supporters residing in cities, accused the suspects of membership to the KCK, and categorized the arrested as terrorists. Kurdish activists described the crackdown as an assault on Kurdish civil society intended to stifle legitimate-and legal-opposition to repressive government policies (Casier et al. 2011).

⁴⁴ Founded as the KKK (*Koma Komalen Kurdistan*), the KCK, the alleged political front for the outlawed PKK, is claimed by its founders to be a political project. Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, notes that it builds "on the self-government of local communities and is organized in the form of open councils, town councils, local parliaments and larger congresses." As an organization within the PKK complex, the KCK is formally headed by Murat Karayılan, with decision-making councils composed of representatives from the different parts of the Kurdistan regions (spread over Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran) and the Kurdish Diaspora in Western Europe (Akkaya & Jongerden 2011). KCK is considered to be the architect of the free municipality model adopted by the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) at a three-day conference in February 2008 (Casier & Jongerden 2011).

In these trials, the charges were predicated on the newly enacted Turkish Penal Code (*Türk Ceza Kanunu*, TCK) of 2004. In particular, the charges directed against journalists in the trials were predicated on TCK's Article 220(6), which stated that those who commit a crime on behalf of an illegal organization, although s/he is not a member of this organization, shall be punished as being a member of an illegal organization, apart from the actual punishment for the crimes s/he has committed, and on the Articles 7(2) and 6(2) of the Anti-Terror Law (*Terörle Mücadele Kanunu*, TMK) amended in 2006, which punish those spreading propaganda for a terror organization (Bayır 2013)⁴⁵.

The Ergenekon, Balyoz and match-fixing trials destabilized power hierarchies in politics by touching for the first time the politically and economically powerful actors who had thus far been perceived as untouchable. While the trials were heard separately, the accused were tied to one another through the public discourse that defined the two poles of the debate, the nation and its enemies. The KCK trials, on the other hand, extended the list of enemies at another front as they targeted the Kurdish political movement, which was long in conflict with many of the targets of the three other trials. Overall, through these trials the definition of the nation was implied to exclude anyone associated with the political fronts judged at these trials.

Ergenekon: "The Nation vs. the Coup Plotters"

On 21 January 2008, news broke of a major operation by the Turkish police against a network of ultra-nationalists many of which were known for their previous involvement in

⁴⁵ As the Human Rights Watch Turkey researcher Emma Sinclair Webb noted, the law could be interpreted to mean "if the PKK says brush your teeth and you brush your teeth, then you're obviously operating on behalf of the PKK." (Simon 2015).

crime but were left unpunished. These detentions in the initial period of the trial were carried out in the midst of discussions over two crucial decisions by the Constitutional Court. In March 2008, the chief public prosecutor had filed a case seeking the dissolution of the AKP on the grounds that it endangered the secular regime, and in July 2008 the Constitutional Court had decided not to ban the party (Constitutional Court Decision, E. 2008/1, K. 2008/2). In addition, in June 2008, the Constitutional Court had annulled the constitutional amendments thereby lifting the ban on the wearing of the headscarf in universities.

During this initial phase of the Ergenekon trial, party members such as the Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç presented the trial as a means to a brighter future where Turkish politics would be purged from unlawful organizations and Turkey would turn into an actual constitutional state. The difficulties encountered over the trial process were accordingly temporary and compared to pains of childbirth (Vatan 2008). In 2009, the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan calling for respect to the trial process, likened it to the *Mani Pulite* (clean hands) judicial investigation into political corruption undertaken in Italy in the 1990s (T24 2014). In these accounts, the nation was the primary agent of purging politics from unlawful organizations and of constituting a democratic future:

This nation has purged politics from those who back the gangs, the mafia and the dark rooms. It turned them all down. Unlawfulness is an unacceptable problem for politics, for economy and for trade. We have to develop democracy, law and universal values in cooperation. (Hürriyet 2008)

In their public speeches, the ministers often tried to keep the party at a distance from the trial process by stressing the presence of judicial independence in Turkey. Yet, they also claimed to be an agent of the purge simply by acting on behalf of the nation and representing

the nation's will. This was most clearly illustrated in 2008 when the leader of the main opposition party, Deniz Baykal, accused the Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan of acting as the prosecutor of the trial, and Erdoğan claimed indeed to be the prosecutor of the trial: "the prosecution acts on behalf of the nation and we endeavor to stand upon the nation's rights." (T24 2016). Similarly, the Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Şahin explained the position of the party vis-à-vis the trial process by noting the following:

As the governing party we are not standing against the independent judiciary that struggles with crime organizations. We are telling them, "if you see a wrongdoing, a blemish, an unlawful act, you should advance upon those no matter where it comes at". Turkey is purging and it will continue to purge. Turkey will be more transparent in the future. (Milliyet 2009a)

In these discourses, the enemies of the AKP were identified with the enemies of the nation, and depicted as elements of the past:

All games are played upon us [the AKP]. [They think] "How would the AKP leave the government? When they came, our order was disturbed. When they came, our set up was disturbed." ... The indictments include the phone records, the coup plots and other incidents that appeared in the newspapers. They all have only one target. The gangs are trying to topple down the government of the AK Party in Turkey. We are not falling, thank God. We remain standing. If parties other than the AK Party were in government and they had planned these conspiracies, we would not have been able to stay in power. We would have collapsed even by its wind. Yet, the AK Party exists. It's firm and does not collapse. It takes its power from the blessing of my God and the appreciations of

our nation. This is why we are in government for 6,5 years, approaching 7. We defeated all the leeches that sucked the blood of the nation and ruined the wealth of the nation. We now deal with the big ones. [They wish] They will topple down the AK Party. [They wish] They will collapse the government elected by the people. Where are those old coup days? Where are their prosperous days? The small and the big, they are now some place else. In Turkey, the AK Party is in rule. We challenge them. Would Ibrahim fear the fire of Nemrut? [Referring to the confrontation between Abraham and Nimrod, which in the Islamic tradition is held to be a confrontation between the good and the evil] Bring it on! Bring it on! Bring it on! Should those troublemakers with insatiable appetites be the rulers in Turkey again? Should their sayings become the rule? Should Turkey go back to its dark days? Or should the AK Party that rises like the sun on that darkness -- thank God-- proceed on its way without falling from power? (NTV 2009b)

These discourses, demonized the suspects and presented the trial process as a righteous means of empowering the nation -- and therefore the AKP -- against the coup plotters who oppressed the will of the nation. They also stressed the weakness of the enemy:

The more we talk about it [the indictment] the more we see what is going on in this country, who did what, who collaborated with whom, who undermined the indivisibility of Turkey, who is behind the political assassinations, what the forces that stirred up trouble in Turkey have calculated, and how the AKP survived all these. The voice records of retired generals are made public. Oh, God! What did they talk of, what did they say! I thank God that Turkey has not entered a war at the time of these generals. They cannot fight a war. They did anything but

soldiering. They had been occupied with politics, with coup d'états. They did not even refrain from collaborating with outside powers to have their ways (Milliyet 2009b).

The initial suspects of the trial included actors who were previously convicted in public conscience. Among these were well-known members of the mafia, retired soldiers who were known for their documented torture, instigation of assassinations and contacts to mafia during the 1990s, or members of ultra-nationalist civil society organizations who were known for filing legal complaints against journalists and intellectuals for insulting Turkishness to get them punished by the courts. Suspects also included soldiers, judges, prosecutors, academics, journalists, or civil society actors who were primarily known by the public for their critique of political Islam and staunch defense of secularism. Many among the suspects had held influential posts within the state establishment as well as outside of it. Among these were the Chief of the General Staff, the former Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation, the former head of the YÖK, the former mayor of Istanbul, former and current presidents of multiple universities, heads of occupational chambers, founders of prominent civil society organizations and news networks. There were also those known for their family ties to such influential figures such as the wife of the Constitutional Court's vice president who was part of the decision committee in the closure case brought against the AKP.

In the operations, the police would raid the homes of the suspects, hunt their houses for evidence and put the suspects into police cars in front of the press holding the suspects' heads. The indictment relied heavily on documents seized at suspects' homes and wiretaps. The discourses of enemy and friend expressed by the AKP constituted a framework for

categorizing the authorities undertaking the operations -- the judge, the prosecutor, the police -- and the suspects into good and bad, powerful and weak, and elements of future and elements of past.

The Ergenekon trial initially gathered support from a wide variety of groups. For many, the trial offered an opportunity to uncover the crimes of the past, to address the past injustices at various state institutions, to punish the culprits that escaped punishment, and to set the tone of justice in Turkey. In this context, human rights advocates as well as Kurdish, leftist and religious political organizations applied to the court to become a part of the trial as petitioners. These included the Human Rights Association, the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP)⁴⁶, the Progressive Lawyers Association, the Diyarbakır Bar Association, the Lawyers Association (*Hukukçular Derneği*), families of the forcibly disappeared, families of the victims of unsolved murders and academics who had been profiled (Hürriyet 2008, Korkut 2009, Etha 2010).

However, in 2009, the rounds of raids and mass arrests began to draw criticism both domestically and internationally. Illegal collection of evidence including wiretappings that breached individual privacy and the privacy of communication protected by Article 20 and Article 22 of the Constitution, and raised particular concern. In 2009, the Ministry of Justice revealed that 113,270 people including 56 judiciary officials had been wiretapped as part of the Ergenekon investigation between 2006-2009. Courts across the country had requested the surveillance of the phones of 33,037 people solely in 2009 (Köse 2012). These wiretaps were made public with the publication of the 2,500 page indictment. In response, the EU, for

⁴⁶ The DTP was a Kurdish political party and the successor of the Democratic People's Party, which was banned by the Constitutional Court in 2003 on the grounds of supporting PKK.

example, warned that the case's evidence collection methods involved procedures that were considered illegal, such as wiretaps and surveillance of electronic correspondence without a warrant (Köse 2012). Suspects also pressed to the courts accusing the Ergenekon prosecutors of violating their right to privacy⁴⁷.

The arrests of well-respected public figures along with those categorized as criminals by the public also cast doubt about the intentions of the AKP, the members of the judiciary and the police force that conducted the investigation⁴⁸. Many thought that what the suspects had in common was their criticism of political Islam and particularly of the Gülen movement. Allegations that the trial was planned and conducted by the Gülen movement, members of which had infiltrated the police and the judiciary, began to appear in books and newspaper columns (Ince 2009, Şener 2009).

The police raid on the house of the Chairperson of the Association for Supporting Contemporary Life (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, ÇYDD), Professor Türkan Saylan, who was 73 years old and at the terminal stage of cancer, was a break in the process. Saylan

⁴⁷ In a trial opened in 2008, İlhan Selçuk, a prominent journalist of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and a suspect of the Ergenekon trial, accused the Ergenekon prosecution of violating his right to privacy through the claims made in the Ergenekon indictment. In 2010, the court decided that İlhan Selçuk's personal rights were attacked during the Ergenekon trial (İlkiz 2010).

⁴⁸ Here I should note that over the course of the Ergenekon trial legal conflict over the state's access to individual communication continued. In June 2008 the Ankara 11th High Criminal Court granted both the Gendarmerie and the National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT) the authority to view countrywide data traffic retained by telecommunication-service providers. Subsequently, the Supreme Court of Appeals overruled the Ankara court's decision. It stated that "no institution can be granted such authority across the entire country, viewing all people living in the Republic of Turkey as suspects, regardless of what the purpose of such access might be." In addition, in 2009, the Constitutional Court cancelled the provision which stipulated that the director of Information and Communication Technologies Authority (*Telekomünikasyon İletişim Başkanlığı*, TIB) be appointed by the prime minister. The reason was that the provision contradicted the Constitution which guaranteed the protection of public officers against political authority (Köse 2012).

was a staunch secularist Turkish medical doctor and social activist, internationally renowned for her struggles against leprosy and for the education of young girls (NYTimes 2009). Aside from her civil society activities, she was known for her stance against the wearing of headscarf at universities and the Gülen movement's infiltration of the state. On the day of the raid, when she spoke to the crowd gathered in front of her house with the help of her friends and relatives, her emphasis was on having never sided with coup plotters. As evidence, she cited that she had not been allowed to speak at the Republican Rallies held in Izmir in 2007 when she explained what she would say at the stage, namely that ÇYDD supports neither sharia nor coup d'état (NTV 2009a).

Standing in support with Saylan, the Turkish Medical Association (*Türk Tabipler Birliği*, TTB) claimed the identity represented by Saylan as sacred for doctors and noted that hurting Saylan would offend and traumatize all doctors (Türk Tabipler Birliği 2009). A month later, when Saylan died of cancer, the public discourse on her was divided between those who thought of her as a “laicist witch” and those who thought of her as a “modern saint” (Bora 2009). Her funeral was attended by thousands. Slogans chanted at the funeral included “Turkey is laic and will remain laic!” “We are all soldiers of Mustafa Kemal!” AKP members, however, did not attend the funeral. In a parliamentary query, a CHP member of the parliament, Mehmet Sevigen, asked the prime minister if he was not disturbed by the absence of government officials at the funeral of Saylan who had devoted her life to science, education and health. Pointing at the absence of the governor of Istanbul and the Chief of Istanbul Police, he further asked if the government had verbally instructed these officials not to attend the funeral (CNNTurk 2009).

The eulogies for Saylan stressed that Saylan's social activism was anything but support for a coup d'état. The vice president of ÇYDD, Ayşe Çelikel, noted:

Given that the atmosphere is dominated by fear, by an understanding that accused Türkan Saylan unfairly and cruelly, and after all the unlawful acts directed at her it is very hard for someone to talk without feeling guilt. What did Türkan Saylan want to do? What did she do? What was she accused of? Advocating laïcism and the gains of the Republic as our common denominator; is this coup plotting? Schooling girls, providing access to modern education for the youth; is this coup plotting? Advocating the indivisibility of our country; is this coup plotting? Advocating democracy and human rights; I am asking, is this coup plotting? Advocating the supremacy of law and judicial independence; is this coup plotting? Desiring the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press; is this coup plotting? If these amount to being coup plotters, we are all coup plotters! (Hürriyet 2009)

By 2009, with the raid to Saylan's home, the society was already polarized between those who viewed the trial as a means of purging politics from those coup supporters who had oppressed the will of the nation throughout republican history and those who viewed the trial as a means instrumentalized by the Islamists to denigrate the secularists as coup plotters.

KCK Trials: "The Nation vs. the Terrorists"

The KCK operations started in 2009. When some 50 persons (mainly DTP officials, including three vice-presidents of the party) were detained in a wave of police operations in April and some 80 other detentions followed in December 2009, the AKP distanced itself

from the secular state establishment and its past policies in the Kurdish regions of Turkey's southeast.

In 2006, the cycle of violence between the PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces resumed after the combat death of fourteen PKK fighters. In this crisis that extended into 2008, the AKP successfully gave the impression that it opposed the military's incursions into the region (Öktem 2008). Moreover, the AKP was embracing the Ergenekon trials against the military under whose rule of emergency the Kurds had suffered from unsolved murders, forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions. Many of the civil society activists, academics and bureaucrats tried in Ergenekon were also perceived in the region as extensions of the military that tried to reach out to the Kurds with the goal of cultural assimilation. Finally, by naming the Kurdish issue as the most pressing problem in the country, and announcing a new initiative, a Kurdish opening (*Kürt Açılımı* in Turkish) in May 2009, the party signaled that it had an alternative to the military's oppressive strategy in the Kurdish question (Casier et al. 2011).

At the initial stage of the KCK detentions, Erdoğan and the AKP members' public narratives on the trial continued this trend. They claimed to embrace the Kurdish opening and presented the launching of a Kurdish language channel by the state broadcasting agency, TRT, and the resolution of the YÖK to establish Kurdish language and literature departments in universities as evidence. Upon the December 2009 decision of the Constitutional Court to ban the DTP, on the grounds that the party had become a "focal point of activities against the indivisible unity of the state, the country and the nation⁴⁹," they stressed their respect for

⁴⁹ The court also emphasized support for terrorism and relations with the PKK in its pronounced justification for the decision. Rıza Türmen, a former ECHR judge and a

political parties' agency in politics (Bianet 2009, CNNTürk 2009b), and they distanced themselves from the KCK detentions by emphasizing the independence of the judiciary (Cumhuriyet 2010a)⁵⁰.

After the wave of detentions in 2011, however, the tone of the AKP changed to openly side with the judiciary. This time it presented the trials as a means of purging politics from the terrorists who aimed at destroying the national unity. Erdoğan, answering questions about the KCK detentions noted:

The latest KCK operations... No one should expect us to stop these [the operations]. I am warning those who support the KCK operations: You need to get to know the KCK well. If you do not know them well you should learn [about them] from the informed. Without knowing where the KCK reaches, who assumes what kind of a role in this, the statements you make in the media or elsewhere is support for terrorism. I am talking very frankly because we would not allow the understanding [that there could be] a state within the state that parallels the state. There is only one state in Turkey and that is the state of the Turkish Republic. There cannot be a second state. If there are those who describe me as statist or nationalist because of these statements of mine, if making these

parliamentary member of the CHP, notes that separatism and terrorism are different and the difference between the grounds of decision and the justification of the decision constitute a contradiction to the criteria set by the ECHR (Türmen 2010).

⁵⁰ According to BDP politicians, AKP's attitude was speaking in favor of both sides of a matter and leading a politics that tried to satisfy both the Kurds and the nationalists (Cumhuriyet 2010b). However, in the nation-wide municipal elections on March 29, 2009, the DTP won the region back from the AKP. The "Kurdish opening" faced criticism from opposition parties, especially in August 2009, after deadly attacks of the PKK, and at the end of October, with the return of PKK fighters and families that appeared to the Turkish mainstream as statemanaged by the DTP as a PKK victory parade. In the fall of 2009, the AKP retreated.

statements amounts to statism, to nationalism, then yes I am statist, I am nationalist. We have to present these realities. We do not accept the superiority of one ethnicity over another. We have only one concern. We respect the Kurd as much as we respect the Turk. We respect the Laz just as much. We are [members of] a nation that loves one another for the sake of God and this homeland, and we have struggled for this throughout history. Hence, we will not stay back. ... However, there are those who want to dynamite our love. Let's not give [them] the opportunity. There are those who want to dynamite our brotherhood. Let's not give [them] the opportunity. We are brothers. That's our wealth. We will not give the opportunity to those who want to dynamite our brotherhood. This [religious] holiday is the best response to those who want to dynamite this brotherhood.

(Hürriyet 2011c, Hürriyet 2011b)

In response, the BDP and DTK resorted to the discourse of democratic solution. Slogans at demonstrations organized against the detentions included “Solution not death”, “Making peace is adequate”, “Peace against war, racism and fascism”, “Let the detained friends free”, and “Kurds speak Kurdish” (Hürriyet 2011). In 2011, the BDP and the DTO organized acts of civil disobedience in the southeast and in other parts of Turkey and established demonstration tents of democratic solution, demanding the diminishment of the 10 percent electoral threshold, the practice of education in mother tongue, the release of those arrested in the KCK trial and bringing an end to military operations. They accused the prime minister of establishing an empire of fear:

The prime minister says those who back the KCK detainees are terrorists. ... According to the prime minister all those who support [the KCK] are terrorists.

This means that he wants to establish an empire of fear in Turkey. In this empire of fear, says the prime minister, KCK and the arrests will continue. This means that he is the one to decide on the KCK arrests not the judiciary. You gave yourself away in your hometown [Erdoğan had given his speech at his hometown]. Confess. You assigned the duty to your police. You ordered them to prepare the case. You put it in front of the judge. ... If there were justice, the mayors in Şırnak would not have been arrested. Are you the prime minister or the chief prosecutor? When it suits your book, you say you don't interfere in the judiciary; when it does not suit your book, you say "I arrested the KCK members." It is not possible to talk of democracy in this country, which is governed by the prime minister. If we look at the inept statements of his war and interior minister and the member of the parliament, who is his advisor and named Akdoğan, we need to put democratic solution, the union with the people, and civil rights against those who claim war. The people will overturn this game. If you act like the chief prosecutor of the TC [Turkish Republic] and call KCK a parallel state, then you face the decisions made by the people and the organizations of these people that you call the state. What will then happen if the prosecutor issues an arrest warrant for you, calling you a KCK member? Is such a state, such an understanding of state, and such a governance possible? (İmrağ 2011)

In his response to the civil disobedience acts, Erdoğan strived to delegitimize the civility of action: "What is civil about these, for God's sake!" (Akkoç 2011). In his description of the acts of civil disobedience as a means of "dynamiting the unity and solidarity" he criminalized the campaign and noted that the KCK detainees were not arrested

for their political activities (Sol 2011, CNNTurk 2011). Similarly, the deputy prime minister noted:

The BDP members who call for civil disobedience are using these as a means of being elected again. The BDP parliamentarian is attacking vehicles with stones in his hand. Another MP slaps the police in the face. If they now resort to civil disobedience, that's good. But sitting on a chair and holding an umbrella under the rain, these awkward scenes are not for MPs. Throwing stones, getting after people is not civil disobedience and these are not things that a politician would do. (Kırmızıtaş et al. 2011)

When Professor Büşra Ersanlı and the renowned publisher/writer Ragıp Zarakolu were arrested, the interior minister, Idris Naim Şahin, also advocated the arrests by noting that Ersanlı was not arrested because she is a professor. He further stated that the public should suspect her because of a class she taught on political revolt, her previous communist activism and the leftist political activities of her relatives before the 1980s. He also noted “this region [the southeast] was ruled by feudal structures such as landlords (Aga) and sheikhs. Now these feudal structures are replaced by another feudal structure, which is a communist feudal structure [referring to the PKK]” (Etha 2011).

The claims of the interior minister ran in parallel to the indictment. The indictment aimed to establish that “the PKK, an originally Marxist Leninist organization, was actually against religion, and entered into a strategic alliance with Islamic ideology when it needed.” (Bayır 2014) Given that in AKP’s vision of the nation, the ideal unity of the Turks and Kurds was only possible under the codes of Islamic brotherhood, those Kurds who did not religiously and ideologically fit into this vision were demonized. By 2011, through the KCK

detentions, any association with Kurdish political organizations sufficed to stamp someone as terrorist and hence as an enemy of the nation.

Ergenekon, KCK, Balyoz, Match-Fixing: “The Nation vs. the Terrorist Coup Plotters”

2011 was a turning point in Turkey in that the country would wake up to a new series of detentions each day in either one of the four trials: Ergenekon, KCK, Balyoz or match-fixing. At times, the discourses that dominated the public discussion associated the defendants of different trials with one another, establishing two major fronts of political enemy in the country, the coup plotters and the terrorists.

For instance, the match-fixing trial that peaked in 2011 was described by Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç as part of an effort to purge politics from unlawful organizations:

Among the names included [in this trial] there are [soccer] club managers, soccer players, people from the Turkish Soccer Federation or the Central Arbitration Board. This trial is seen as an important judicial operation. The search and the detainment decisions show that there has been a comprehensive investigation process. We will impatiently wait for and follow the judicial process. It may be possible to bring certain events taking place in soccer into daylight, judge and acquit the responsible ones. All these show that Turkey is on the way of becoming a constitutional state. Law and the judiciary are becoming strong in Turkey (Hürriyet 2011a).

Similarly, former Interior Minister Beşir Atalay noted:

The most important feature of our term is the struggle with gangs, the mafia and the crime organizations. Be it in the sports or in other fields. These things should

come to light, should be well investigated and well judged. Turkey is on the road to become a clean, transparent, open society in the sports as well as in other areas (Hürriyet 2011a).

A member of the parliament from the AKP also accused one of the defendants of the match-fixing trial of financially supporting the Ergenekon (T24 2012a). A columnist of the *Zaman* newspaper called the defendants of the match-fixing trial “the untouchables of soccer” and “the Ergenekon of football”, and described the trial process as an empowerment of civilian rule against the tutelage of the military:

Now they are undertaking an operation against the Ergenekon in football. The question “could there be Ergenekon in football” is a meaningless question today. If there is tutelage then there are coup plotters. If there are coup plotters, then they have their media, their businessmen, their gangs and their men. ... Unlawfulness rules in every social group, state apparatus, and constitutional institution. The struggle is between tutelage and democratization. Today the civil power holders have the initiative. All the masters of tutelage, in this context the masters of football, are doomed to loose. (Gülerce 2011)

In this atmosphere, families of the defendants, particularly in the Balyoz trial, argued that the evidence against them was fabricated by the Gülen movement, that the case was a forgery and that the wiretappings breached privacy laws (Krugman 2012). In response, AKP politicians chose to normalize the problems associated with the trial processes. The prime minister, for example, when questioned on wiretappings noted:

Even the private sector is wiretapping nowadays. Turkcell, Vodafone, Telekom, they all do wiretappings, you also know this. Even a person can do this by buying the appropriate apparatus (T24 2011).

After 2011, any criticism directed at the trials would be translated by the AKP politicians into support for the enemy. The Prime Minister Erdoğan, for example, accused the leader of the main opposition party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, of being a coup supporter when Kılıçdaroğlu contended that these trials were instrumentalized as means of revenge rather than of justice and that the government lacked a sense of justice (Haberler 2012):

Dear Mr. Kılıçdaroğlu first needs to see and understand this: One cannot be the lawyer of the Ergenekon and be against coup d'états at the same time. ... You salute the February 28 [military memorandum in 1997], you salute the April 27 [military memorandum in 2007 about Abdullah Gül's presidency], you speak highly of the May 27 [Coup of 1961], and then you say that February 28 has created the AK Party. In this country, it is only the CHP that grew up in the incubator of the coups. None other than the CHP has taken advantage of the coups. (Dünya 2012)

Similarly, any kind of popular opposition to the trials would immediately be oppressed. In cases where opponents would take to the streets they would be teargassed. For example, in July 2011, after the chairman of the Fenerbahçe soccer club was arrested, in solidarity with Aziz Yıldırım, Fenerbahçe fans organized a support march where supporters were teargassed by the police (Hürriyet 2011b). In fact it is in this period that teargas turned into a widespread instrument of suppressing dissent (Över & Taraktaş 2017).

In 2013 the Ergenekon verdict was announced. Ilker Başbuğ, who was the Commander in Chief of the Turkish Armed Forces between 2008 and 2010, was sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of establishing and leading a terrorist organization and attempting to destroy the Turkish government or to attempting to partially or completely prevent its functioning. AKP officials claimed victory. Egemen Bağış, the EU Minister of the time, described the trial as a defeat of a terrorist organization in the name of democracy and the rule of law.

Today, it has been officially accepted that Ergenekon was a terrorist organization. ... We as a nation are seeing a historic day in the name of democracy and the rule of law. (AlJazeera 2013b)

Bülent Arınç, the Deputy Prime Minister of the time, championed the bereavement of the military of its prerogatives while distancing himself from the decision through the discourse of the rule of law:

Nobody has the privilege of committing crimes. ... We are not people who are going to be happy about anybody's arrest. But there is a court ruling and everyone should respect it. (AlJazeera 2013b)

Similarly, the key advisor of the prime minister Yalçın Akdoğan noted:

Ergenekon trial is the name of the biggest legal payoff of the Republican history. This trial brings to account the interventionist spirit that originates from May 27, March 12, September 12, February 28 and April 27 [all of which mark the date of a military intervention into politics]. The Ergenekon trial is a turning point for the future of Turkish democracy. With the Ergenekon trial, not only is an illegal group being brought to account but a tutelary understanding that had settled

down within the state is also being eliminated. Turning the coup attempt allegations into a matter of judgement and punishing the responsible is a historical event and Turkey has been successful. (Milliyet 2013)

Conclusion

From 2007 onwards these political trials set the fronts in political currents. The AKP claimed to be against the Ergenekon front. In public speeches this front was associated with the CHP, the high judiciary, the military and any actor that supported either one of these institutions. The AKP also claimed to conceive the Kurds a part of the nation while putting many members of Kurdish political organizations into jail. At this front, the Kurdish political parties, the DTP, the BDP and anyone associated with them were described as terrorist. According to the AKP, the Ergenekon front was the long-time oppressor of the Kurds and the AKP -- not Kurds' own political organizations -- would be able to transform this relationship as it strengthened its place within the state against the Ergenekon.

This shift in public discourse and instrumentalization of political trials as a method of destabilizing power hierarchies clearly affected the field of journalism. Journalists of varying political identities interpreted the developments in varying ways and adjusted their professional actions accordingly. Before addressing journalists' interpretations of the destabilization in power hierarchies, in the next chapter, I will first discuss the symbolic and material measures that directly destabilized the power positions inside the field of journalism. After all, journalists' interpretations of the developments in politics were enhanced when they observed the repercussions of the political developments in their professional relationships as well.

CHAPTER 4

DESTABILIZATION OF POWER HIERARCHIES IN THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM,

2002 – 2013

Previous balance of power was disturbed to the advantage of the party not only in politics. A similar transformation took place in the field of journalism. As explained in detail in the second chapter, political and economic power holders strongly influence news content in Turkey. Since the 1980s, in particular, patronage relations between businessmen owners of the media outlets and the government defined the mainstream practice of journalism. When power relationships in politics were destabilized after 2002 so were relationships in journalism. The previous chapter demonstrated that the AKP used a number of material and symbolic forms of state intervention to redistribute power in politics. In this chapter, I address how these forms of intervention disturbed the power hierarchies in the journalistic field, as well. In the subsequent chapters, I then explain how the destabilization in power hierarchies in both politics and journalism shaped journalists' meaning worlds and hence their practices.

This chapter specifically demonstrates that post-2007 disturbances in the structure of journalism worked to the advantage of pro-AKP media outlets. Here, I show how opponents and proponents came to differentiate themselves through political trials, transfer of media ownerships, dismissals of journalists, and the accompanying discourse of punishment and purge of the enemies of the nation. I also show how the opponents' disempowerment brought about the proponents' empowerment. Surrounded by a discourse of punishment and purge,

political trials, transfer of ownerships and dismissals worked to block the “enemy”’s access to claims-making in the media while increasing the access of the “friend”. Here, the tide has turned against the media outlets and the journalists associated with one or the other fronts of “political enemy”. After 2007, religion and public expression of religiosity also turned into a basis for establishing patronage relationships with the party that remained entrenched in the state.

Journalists and Political Trials: Terrorism or Professional Conduct?

In the political trials, journalists were accused of being members of the alleged Ergenekon or KCK organizations. The first wave of arrests in the Ergenekon trial came in 2008 when Mustafa Balbay, the Ankara bureau chief and columnist for the secular *Cumhuriyet*, and Tuncay Özkan, journalist and owner of a cable channel also known for its defense of secularism, were charged with attempting to overthrow the government. The second wave of arrests followed in 2011.

2011 was a particularly devastating year for journalists in Turkey as the number of journalists in jail in the country swelled to over one hundred. This made Turkey the country with the highest number of jailed journalists in the world (CPJ 2011) (See Figure 5). The arrests started in February 2011, when the headquarters of *OdaTV.com*, a political news website known for its anti-AKP stance, was raided by the police. Its founder Soner Yalçın was detained along with seven others, and all were charged with collaborating with the Ergenekon organization, inciting hatred and enmity among the public and possessing secret documents related to national security (Yeşil 2016).

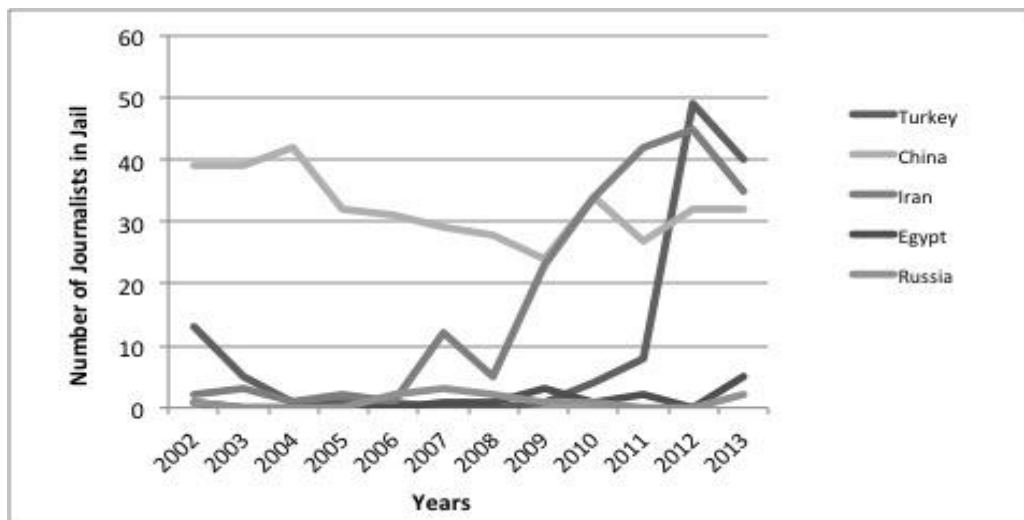


Figure 5. Number of Journalists in Jail (2002-2013)

Source: Committee to Protect Journalists.

Another wave of detentions followed in March 2011. The investigative journalists Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener were accused of being part of Ergenekon's propaganda wing. Ahmet Şık had spent much of his professional life uncovering the unlawful acts of the nationalists who were accused of being members of Ergenekon. At the time of his arrest, Şık was preparing to publish a book, *Imam's Army* – then a manuscript titled *000Kitap* -- on the Gülen movement's infiltration of the police force, providing evidence for how the judiciary and the security forces were corrupted by the movement. Nedim Şener had also published a book in 2009 alleging that Gülenist police officers were responsible for the assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007. Searching for copies of Şık's manuscript, the police raided the offices of the publishing house, *Ithaki*, Şık's prospective publisher, and the newspaper *Radikal*. Authorities confiscated the unpublished manuscript. In the trial, it was cited as a tool for propaganda and an evidence of the connection between Ergenekon and the journalist Şık (AlJazeera 2013b).

The arrest of the two journalists sparked outrage among journalists both domestically and internationally, and cast doubt on the Ergenekon trial. Şık and Şener stressed that the case against them had been fabricated by the Gülenists, and that the ongoing investigations were not part of a democratization process but an attempt to silence the voices of the opposition. However, neither the public unrest nor international press organizations' calls for freedom of the press led to a change in the discourses mobilized by the party in defense of the trial process. A month after Şık and Şener's arrest, when the Prime Minister Erdoğan was pressed at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on why these journalists were arrested he compared Şık's book to a bomb and chose to distance the party from the trial process by reference to judicial independence:

It was not me who made the decision for the seizure of that reportedly unpublished book. It is a crime to use a bomb and to use the components a bomb is made of. Are the police not going to step in if they receive information about the construction of a bomb? So if there was according information, the judiciary made the decision and told the police to go and take it. ... This was a decision taken by the judiciary and not by the executive. When you are concerned you call the judiciary independent. When Turkey is concerned, you say that the judiciary depends on the executive. Yet, the judiciary in Turkey is independent, it does not depend on the executive. (Bianet 2011a)

Similarly, when the EU Chief negotiator Egemen Bağış was pressured on the number of arrested journalists in Turkey on the BBC's renowned news program "Hard Talk," he went so far as to claim that there were no journalists arrested due to their professional

activities, and that some of the arrested were people “who carried journalist identification cards and have been caught while raping another person.”

The government’s discourse of “criminal journalists” and more specifically “terrorist journalists” was further strengthened when in the KCK trials 51 journalists from the pro-Kurdish news outlets *Dicle Haber Ajansı* and *Özgür Gündem* were arrested and charged with either being integrated into the KCK’s so-called Press Committee or seeking to advance the organization’s agenda by propaganda.

For example, on December 20, 2011, the police raided the office of *Özgür Gündem*, rounded up nine journalists and accused them of supporting terrorism based on their coverage of the PKK. *Özgür Gündem* is known for its detailed coverage of the armed conflict in southeastern Turkey throughout the 1990s and for highlighting human rights violations and discrimination in its publications. In the 1990s, during the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military, *Özgür Gündem* was subjected to a wave of brutal repression. Its Istanbul office was bombed and according to the newspaper’s own records between 1992 and 1995, twenty-three of its staff members were murdered⁵¹. Today’s *Özgür Gündem* is a successor to the original newspaper, which was forced to shut down after the bombing of its Ankara office in 1994 (Simon 2015). After operating under various names for a decade, *Özgür Gündem* was formally relaunched in April 2011 and was immediately hit with a wave of prosecutions. *Özgür Gündem* journalists were accused of participating in PKK-organized “media training” conferences held in the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq (Simon 2015).

⁵¹ See the movie “Press” (2010) by Sedat Yılmaz and the documentary “Witnesses of the War” (2012) by Sami Solmaz for more detail.

In other cases, too, journalists' support for Kurdish ethnic rights, their criticism of the actions of the Turkish military, and their references to PKK leaders even in basic news reporting were considered acts of terrorism. For example, the editor Vedat Kurşun of the Kurdish daily *Azadiya Welat*, which was launched in 2006 and had to hire nine different editors since then because all had successively been arrested, was arrested during the KCK operation in 2010. He was sentenced to 166 years in prison for disseminating terrorist propaganda by using the terms "Kurdistan" and "guerilla" in his op-ed pieces, for publishing his interview notes with the imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan and for quoting other PKK members (Yeşil 2016).

Throughout the KCK press trials, the government's narrative of the accused was not much different than its narrative of the journalists of the Ergenekon trial. Accordingly, the journalists were detained not for their professional activities but for being terrorists. The Interior Minister Idris Naim Şahin for instance, compared writers and journalists to PKK fighters, and noted that there was "no difference between the bullets fired [in the Kurdish southeast of Turkey] and the articles written in Ankara." (The Guardian 2012)

During the course of the political trials, multiple journalists reporting on the investigations were charged with violating the secrecy of an ongoing trial. Between 2008 and 2010, when the Ergenekon investigation was at its most intense, approximately four thousand cases were opened against journalists (Yeşil 2016). Many of these cases were launched under Article 285 of the Penal Code, which criminalizes reporting on a confidential criminal investigation, and Article 288, which criminalizes attempting to influence trial proceedings.

Overall, the political trials functioned as a mode of state control over the profession of journalism. The trials defined the enemies of the nation through incarceration and the

political discourse. Journalists and news organizations in ideological proximity to either the staunch secularist or the Kurdish political fronts were in this context not only jailed but also stigmatized as terrorists. In this vein, they lost their access to claims making in the media both materially and symbolically.

Media Outlets and Transfer of Ownerships

One other method instrumentalized was the transfer of media outlet ownerships. Up to 2011, approximately 30 percent of the newspaper circulation has changed hands, moving towards groups closely affiliated with the AKP (Çarkoğlu et. al. 2014). The auction transfers of ownerships were made through TMSF, which had emerged as a central actor of capital transfers in the aftermath of the 2001 economic crisis. State banks, which were strengthened in the aftermath of the 2001 crisis, also turned into significant actors in these transfers by providing easy credit to party supporters in the buying of auctioned outlets. In the process, seizures and auction transfers were presented as part of Turkey's purge from corrupt affairs. The discourse of friends and foes of the nation set by the political trials was used by politicians to legitimize the seizures of media assets.

In 2007, shortly before the general elections and in the midst of the presidential election crisis, TMSF seized the *ATV/Sabah* network, which was established in 1985 and bought by Ciner Group in 2005, on criminal charges surrounding the earlier sale. The chief editor of the newspaper at the time, Fatih Altaylı, notes that the clash between the group and the political authority first started when the newspaper published the headline: "Prime minister, the chief prosecutor" (Özvarış 2015b). The *ATV/Sabah* network was the second largest media group in Turkey. In December 2007, following the AKP's electoral victory,

TMSF sold the network to Çalık Group for \$1.1 billion. With this sale the ownership of the *ATV*, *Yeni Asır TV*, and *Minika TV* channels, *the Radio Turkuvaz*, and *Romantik Radyo* radio stations, and *the Sabah*, *Takvim*, *Yeni Asır* and *Pas Fotomaç* newspapers were handed to Çalık group, in addition to the distribution company *Turkuvaz Dağıtım*.

The public tender held by the TMSF to sell the *Sabah/ATV* to Çalık was highly controversial. Legally, RTÜK was the appropriate authority to ratify the tender. During the tender process, however, the government attempted to change the legislation regulating the activities of RTÜK in a way to introduce more flexibility to the financial operations accompanying the tender process (Buğra & Savaşkan 2014). In addition, two Turkish state-owned banks, Halkbank and Vakıfbank, as well as the Qatari Al Wasaeel media network stepped in to provide loans and enable the purchase (Akın 2009, Karadağ 2010).

The existing ties between the Çalık group and the ruling party played a significant role in the group's purchase of the network. The owner of the Çalık Group was a close friend of the Prime Minister, and Erdoğan's son-in-law was the general manager in the group. The group was allegedly even called by the prime minister as "Our Çalık" back in 2006 in one of the prime ministers' meetings with Aydın Doğan, the owner of the Doğan Media Group (Milliyet 2009). Also, President Gül had himself admitted that he personally had introduced Çalık to the Qatari partners (Karadağ 2010).

The sale of the *Sabah/ATV* network to Çalık Group led to the emergence of what came to be known as the "pool media", where business groups allied with the government would enter into a coalition to finance the take over of auctioned media outlets by proponent business groups. The "pool" would also help proponent outlets when they encountered financial hardships. I should also note that these groups had close ties with one another. The

founder of Çalık group, Ahmet Çalık, for example, had family ties not only with the Prime Minister but also with the Gülen movement through his brother-in-law, the license holder of the daily newspaper, *Zaman*, known to be the most important media organ of the Gülen movement (Buğra & Savaşkan 2014). According to Mehmet Altan, who long wrote as a columnist at the *Star* newspaper but was sacked in 2011, in addition to property transfers, one other method of supporting the proponent media was advertisements. Altan noted that advertisements for proponent newspapers were collected with political pressure. Those who would were compelled to pay for advertisements (Akın 2012).

The *Sabah*/ATV network's transfer was followed by a tax fine imposed on the Doğan Group, the largest media group in Turkey, in 2009. The discursive framework for the transfer of the Doğan Group's properties was set in 2008 when the daily *Hürriyet* and other media outlets owned by the Doğan Group began to publish stories about a German investigation to the Deniz Feneri charity organization. The charity was alleged to have channeled money to AKP leaders⁵². Erdoğan raged and interpreted this as a smear campaign directed at the AKP government by the opposition party CHP and its “collaborator”, Doğan Group:

Recently, those who cannot downgrade the AK Party engaged in a campaign of abuse against the AKP. Yet, enough is enough! The Doğan Group is taking an

⁵² The daily *Hürriyet* owned by Doğan Group reported that €7 million were transferred to the Deniz Feneri organization's Turkey offices, €1.8 million were transferred to Beyaz Holding from the organization's subsidiary operating in Germany, and there was no information regarding the remainder of the donated funds. According to the expert witness report, the organization's executives were also handed millions of euros in cash. Two suspects claimed that high-level Turkish officials, including Zahid Akman, the president of RTÜK, were involved in the deception. A foreigners' office in Germany banned Akman from entering the country in 2007 for five years following claims that he had committed a financial crime (*Hürriyet* 2008).

active role in this. It is carrying out this campaign with the CHP. When I lay this down, he [Aydın Doğan] will clearly say “The prime minister has pointed me as a target” or “The prime minister has pointed my group as a target.” It is ok when you [Aydın Doğan] point the AK Party as a target but it is not ok when the prime minister targets this newspaper that points his party as a target. Well, it [the prime minister pointing the newspaper as a target] is ok!

The prime minister further noted that Aydın Doğan was launching this smear campaign because the AKP would not let him engage in a rent-seeking relationship with the state, as he did in the past:

Nobody can throw the mud of corruption at AK Party. Those who throw the mud of corruption will suffocate in that mud. ... AK Party is not one of those usual political parties. Tayyip Erdoğan is not one of the usual prime ministers, either. You will know this! They [the other prime ministers] could have bargained with Aydın Doğan. Are you [Aydın Doğan] writing all those [referring to the corruption allegations] because you cannot make me bargain with you? The reality behind all those campaigns is [the reality about] Hilton [Hotel, which is located at Taksim, Istanbul, and owned by Aydın Doğan]. He could not make me and my mayor [the mayor of Istanbul] accept his modification plans at Hilton Hotel. He proposed this [the modification plan] to me and my mayor in person. Because he could not get his plans out of me he continues with his campaign. From now on there is no permission for making the big buck, winning all the marbles in secrecy. We will announce everything openly and clearly to the nation.

In fining the largest media company of Turkey, the AKP has instrumentalized the

discourse of purging politics from corrupt relationships. In doing so, the media was associated with the secularist front which was accused in the public discourse surrounding the Ergenekon trial of attacking the AKP, the so-called representative of the nation's will:

... They [the CHP] are not concerned about this country's development, progress. They never had such a concern. ... Yet, this campaign that they have been continuing with for weeks should not be left without a response. Because, this campaign that they have been carrying out together with that media group, places my name in that file on Deniz Feneri in Germany. Has money been transferred to Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister? Did I get any money? ... It is not possible to understand what kind of human beings these are. Sooner or later, justice will be served. The more the hits are, the stronger we get. The more the hits are, the stronger we get. They cast aspersions on us, the stronger we get. We will get even stronger! (Habertürk 2008).

In response, Aydın Doğan accused Erdoğan of blackmailing him, of exceeding the limits of his power as the prime minister and of threatening the freedom of expression in Turkey with the tone of his speeches. According to Aydın Doğan, Erdoğan's speech was a turn in the history of the press in Turkey:

I am openly telling him: If I have an unlawful demand on Hilton, the public authority has the duty to refuse. However, if I as a citizen am making a legitimate request and it is not realized, this is also a crime. Turkish laws do not grant the Prime Minister the right to commit crime. I am curious about this: Why is the Prime Minister so interested in the issue of Hilton? I thought the Hilton issue is within the jurisdiction of the Istanbul municipality. Or has the management of the

Istanbul municipality also been turned over to the Prime Ministry? Given that he [the Prime Minister] keeps harping on Hilton, I draw the inference that this issue has been turned into an instrument of blackmail. Blackmailing does not befit prime ministers. It is a crime, as well. (Habertürk 2008)

In a following speech, the prime minister urged the public to boycott the newspapers of Doğan Group without pronouncing the group's name explicitly:

In this country, trust in the media has come to an end. The media has brought itself to an end. As members of my party, make your own campaign against the media that makes erroneous news. I am telling it like it is: Don't let these newspapers through the doors of your home (Bianet 2008).

Within the same month, an AKP member of the parliament alleged that the Doğan Group was engaged in the smuggling of paper, and that the dailies of *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* were published with smuggled paper. In his account, by means of such smuggling the group had derived unlawful profits and damaged its small competitors in the exchange market. While the Doğan Group named the allegations as an ugly smear, upon the allegations, the Capital Markets Board of Turkey (*Sermaye Piyasası Kurulu*, SPK) started an investigation into the group (Bianet 2008a).

A few months later, in 2009, RTÜK ordered the closure of 11 Doğan broadcasting stations and the state tax agency fined Doğan Group US \$2.5 billion for tax evasion. The fine cost the group two of its flagship newspapers, *Milliyet* and *Vatan*, and the chief editor of the *Hürriyet* daily was also replaced (Simon 2015). Doğan Group sold *Milliyet* and *Vatan* to the consortium of Demirören and Karacan groups. The AKP referred to this decision as an

example of impartiality and of its determination to end the long tradition of the Doğan family's involvement in rent-seeking relationships with the government.

Çalık Group's purchase of the *Sabah/ATV* network and Doğan Group's sale of *Milliyet* and *Vatan* were not the only cases of ownership transfer undertaken after 2007 (See Table 3. for a summary of the ownership transfers from opponent to proponent business groups). More importantly, none of the purchases by proponent groups were justifiable from a purely economic point of view. In the case of Çalık's purchase, journalists noted that Çalık was less than enthusiastic about the *Sabah/ATV* tender. It was later reported that this particular venture drained Çalık Group's finances, leading Fitch Rating to downgrade the company to a B- in August 2010. In fact in 2013, Çalık sold the *Sabah/ATV* network to Kalyon Group, another proponent business group⁵³. It is alleged that in this sale Erdoğan ordered fundraising so that the newspaper would be bought by the Kalyon Group. Another sale was accomplished by the Gülenist Akın Group. The owner Akın Ipek, who had purchased the *Bugün* newspaper in 2005, bought the secularist, anti-AKP TV channel *Kanaltürk* in 2008 and strengthened his position as a media owner. Similarly, Ethem Sancak, another businessmen in close circles with the AKP, first became a partner of the *Star* Group, including the daily *Star* and *Kanaltürk* in 2007⁵⁴ and later bought it all. Similarly, in 2013, TMSF seized the media assets of the Karamahmet Group in return for the groups' debts. The assets were then sold to Ethem Sancak without an auction. These assets included the *Akşam* and *Güneş* newspapers, the *SKYTURK 360 TV channel*, the *Alem*, *Platin*, *Stuff*, *Autocar* and

⁵³ The Kalyon Group is currently building Istanbul's third airport and is also responsible for the shopping mall project that was going to be built at Taksim's Gezi Park. This led to the culmination of one of the biggest mass protests of republican history in 2013.

⁵⁴ TMSF had seized the daily *Star* in 2004 from its initial owner Uzan Group. Then it had sold it to a Cypriot Businessmen, Ali Özmen Safa.

FourFourTwo journals, and the *LigRadyo, Alem FM* radio stations (Diken 2014b). When Ethem Sancak also encountered financial difficulties because of the TV channel, he entered into a partnership with Fettah Tamince, another pro-AKP businessmen, to overcome the problems. This partnership was also supported by the Azerbaijan's state energy company Socar. An AKP member of the parliament was also listed among the daily *Star's* license holders.

Table 3. Transfer of Newspaper Ownerships (2002-2013)

Newspaper	2002	2008	2011	2013
Sözcü	-	Burak Akbay	Burak Akbay	Burak Akbay
Posta	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan
Hürriyet	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan
Radikal	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan	Doğan
Habertürk	-	-	Ciner	Ciner
Akşam	Çukurova	Çukurova	Çukurova	Sancak
Güneş	Çukurova	Çukurova	Çukurova	Sancak
Milliyet	Doğan	Doğan	Demirören	Demirören
Vatan	Doğan	Doğan	Demirören	Demirören
Sabah	Ciner	Çalık	Çalık	Çalık
Takvim	Ciner	Çalık	Çalık	Çalık
Yeni Asır	Ciner	Çalık	Çalık	Çalık
Star	Uzan	Sancak	Sancak	Sancak
Yeni Şafak	Albayrak	Albayrak	Albayrak	Albayrak
Türkiye	Ihlas	Ihlas	Ihlas	Ihlas
Yeni Asya	Yeni Asya	Yeni Asya	Yeni Asya	Yeni Asya
Milli Gazete	Ömer Özek	Ömer Özek	Ömer Özek	Ömer Özek

Note: White areas indicate opponent business groups and grey areas indicate proponent business groups.

Overall, after 2007, the transfer of media ownerships turned into a tool of punishing the enemies of the “nation” and rewarding the supporters by regulating access to claims-making in the media. In the context of the transfers and the associated discourse of punishment and purge, a clear distinction emerged between proponent and opponent media outlets. Outlets owned by Çalık, Albayrak, Hedef, and Kalyon Groups were considered as organic proponents of the party. In addition, outlets owned by Koza-Ipek, and Ihlas Groups

were closely affiliated with the Gülen movement, and were proponents of the party up to 2013. Outlets owned by Ciner, Doğan and Doğuş, which were seen as outsiders of those organic relationships, on the other hand, were subjected to pressure to change their editorial policies to align their news content with the government narrative.

In making this distinction between proponent and mainstream media outlets, religious identity played a crucial role. Affirmation of religious identity by proponent outlets and exclusion of the others through their secular identity became integral to the building of a collective identity among the proponents. For the mainstream media, increasing the religious content of their publications and broadcasts also turned into a means of stabilizing power relationships.

Overall, both proponent and mainstream media groups agreed to bring their editorial policies in line with the government's narrative on political issues. In fact, in October 2011, two days after PKK's attack in Hakkari (a city in the southeast of Turkey) in which 24 soldiers were killed and 22 injured, Erdoğan gathered journalists and media owners at the prime ministry to tell them what to publish and broadcast on the Kurdish issue. The owners of the Doğuş Group, Doğan Group, Karamehmet Group, and Ciner Group attended the meeting along with the owners of the Sabah/ATV Group and the *Zaman* and *Türkiye* newspapers. Representatives of *Milli Gazete*, *Yeni Akit*, *Yeni Şafak*, *TV24*, *TV8* as well as chief editors of *Habertürk*, *Radikal*, *Star*, *Hürriyet*, *CNN Türk*, *Akşam*, *Habertürk TV* and *Taraf* were also there⁵⁵. Smaller independent and opposition news outlets like the

⁵⁵ After the meeting, the news agencies Anadolu Ajansı, Ajans Haber Türk, Ankara Haber Ajansı, Cihan Haber Ajansı, and İhlas Haber Ajansı made a joint declaration promising to abide by the orders of competent authorities to stay away from perspectives that lead to fear, chaos, enmity, panic and intimidation in the reporting of news relating to terror and violence.

Cumhuriyet, *Sözcü*, *Birgün*, *Evrensel* and *Aydınlık* newspapers as well as professional organizations such as TGS or TGC were not invited to the meeting (Bianet 2011b).

Finally, I should note that in this era, RTÜK continued and in fact increased the fines distributed to TV channels. Figure 6. presents the distribution of fines among mainstream, pro-AKP and Gülenist media outlets. Accordingly, channels owned by secular businessmen have received far more punishment from RTÜK when compared with channels owned by proponent businessmen.

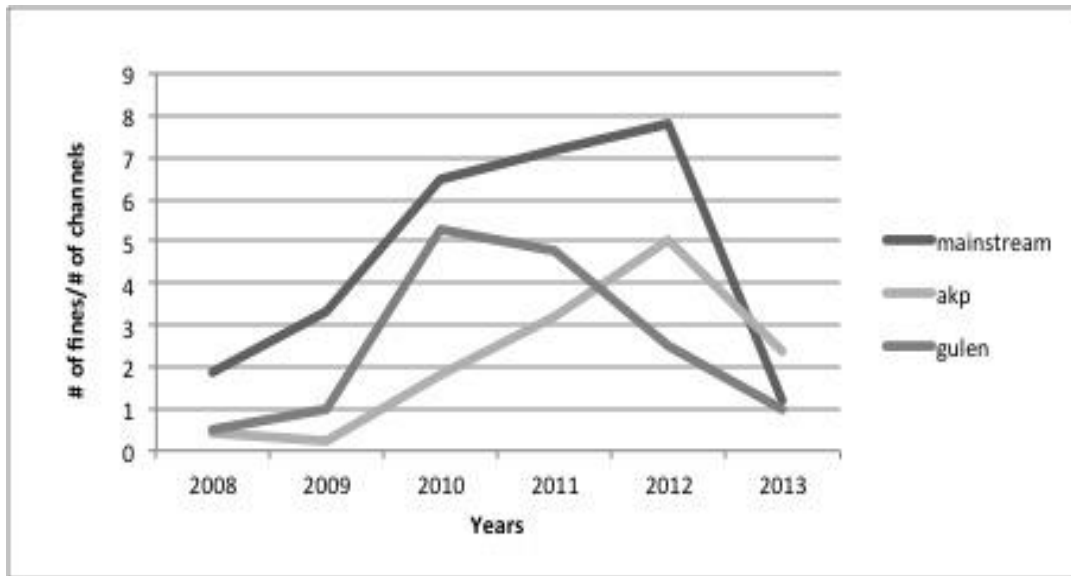


Figure 6. RTUK fines for TV Channels (2008 and 2013)

Source: www.medyatekzipmerkezi.com

Journalists and the Party

After 2007, aside from the political trials and transfer of ownerships, journalists and media outlets were also verbally attacked by prominent politicians directly for their political positions in the past and the present. In the public verbal attacks, both individual and organizational actors of the secularist mainstream media were presented as enemies of the nation, and its alleged representative AKP. A speech in 2011 by the prime minister presents an example:

We came to power not with the support of the media but despite the media. ... We came to power not with the support of the capital but despite the capital. We came to power with you, with the support of the nation. We came [to power] with the efforts of the nation, with the prayers of the nation. We came to power not with the support of international gangs, national gangs but with the appreciation of the nation. We are backed by you, we are backed by the nation. ... We grew up fighting against the headlines. We reached this day despite the mentality that said “he cannot even be a village headman⁵⁶. ... They [the media] ran these headlines.

(CNNTürk 2011)

The journalists that were categorized as enemies of the nation were also presented as enemies of Islam. For instance, in 2009, the prime minister criticized Bekir Coşkun, who often labeled the voters of the AKP as ignorant yokels, for sleeping with his dog:

These people have dear dogs. They sleep and breathe with them.

According to many interpreters of Sunni Islam having a dog at home is forbidden by religion. Similarly, he called the same columnist “a person from whose pen dirt leaks”, after the columnist wrote a column where he used a fable of La Fontaine’s to criticize the military officers. In 2007, before the presidential elections, Coşkun, who wrote that Abdullah Gül would not be his president and that the Islamists’ plan to seize this country and to realize the counter revolution was at work. The prime minister responded that the columnist should leave his Turkish citizenship. Shortly after, Coşkun began to receive threats. His readers and neighbors struggled to physically protect him from these threats (Coşkun 2011).

⁵⁶ This refers to the headline of the daily *Hürriyet* in 1998 after Erdoğan was jailed for four months in 1998 for reading a poem with an Islamist theme.

In this period, the pressures of the 1990s -- to use words such as “terrorist” each time the PKK was mentioned on TV -- continued. In addition, in the public accusations relationships with or support for Kurdish political organizations or media outlets were used to label individual journalists as enemies of the nation. In a speech in 2011, the prime minister noted:

They [journalists] don't see the fascism of the BDP in the region, they cannot see. They don't see the attachment between MHP and BDP, BDP and CHP, they don't want to see, they don't question. ... A lady journalist writes columns, she sometimes comments on TV, too. In the last few years, she is out of control and in that spirit, she spills out hatred against the AK Party. ... She speaks to the PKK's media outlet [and notes] “oppression and the politics of road construction always go together”. ... What she means to say is this: Allegedly we are building the double highways to facilitate an operation as the one carried out in Dersim [in 1935]. This is not bravery [referring to the last name of the journalist, Mert, which literally means brave] but cowardice [Namert, the opposite of brave]. What inconsiderateness, tactlessness! Road is civilization. A country that does not have roads cannot talk of civilization. Am I going to make this nation, my citizens, my people jump over ditches? This is a government's duty. Who are you trying to look cute to? What is the source of this attachment to PKK and the BDP? How could you be so amenable towards the BDP and aggressive against the AK Party?

(CNNTürk 2011)

In another speech Erdoğan referred to the attitude of the BDP politicians in 2011 toward the Roboski/Uludere incident, where a Kurdish town bordering Iraq was hit with air

strikes by Turkish warplanes. He slandered journalists for criticizing him and for submitting to the enemies of the AKP. In this speech he connected the enemies of the nation to one another:

... These [referring to BDP politicians] can engage in politics only through the dead. If there are no deaths then they would not be able to engage in politics. Then, there are also the vultures. There are those in the media who run campaigns through dead bodies. There are parties, who do politics through sad deaths. Those who for decades brought those who intervened in the democracy onto themselves, curse at the honored military of this country. Who are you? You are the ones who until very recently snap to attention [in front of the military], salute [the military] and write columns along the lines of the orders you had received. Until yesterday, the uniformed would call you and scold you for what you have written and what you have told. We saved these from their leashes. However, yesterday the leashes around their neck were national, today they are wearing international leashes. (Erdoğan 2012)

In many cases, journalists and columnists who engaged in public quarrels with party members or staunchly criticized the party in their writings would be dismissed by their bosses. According to CHP's 2014 report "Journalists Whose Pen Has Been Broken", during the AKP's 12 years in rule at least 1863 journalists were fired or forced to resign for political reasons (Ağbaba et al. 2014). An early example of such a dismissal was the case of Emin Çölaşan from the daily *Hürriyet*. Çölaşan, a staunch secularist, a critique of the AKP and one of the most popular columnists of *Hürriyet*, lost his job shortly after the 2007 presidential elections.

The dismissals were often ordered by phone calls or by lists sent to the owners. There were also times when politicians publicly asked media bosses to dismiss their columnists. The prime minister's February 26, 2010 speech presents an example:

I am addressing the bosses of the newspapers. You cannot say, "what can I do, they are columnists, I cannot control them." You will say "you are responsible for this, my friend." ... Columnists cannot write whatever they want. When necessary, the boss should say "Sorry, we don't have room for you." Everyone should know his/her limits. Watch the columnist that you are paying for!

Direct phone calls from political figures to the owners of media outlets were an existing practice in the Turkish media. However, the frequency of these phone calls is said to have increased especially after 2008, reaching an unprecedented level in the following years. In 2008, journalist Dağıstanlı (2014) had witnessed such a moment while he was in the room of the channel manager of *NTV*. The phone rang while they were having a conversation. The person on the phone was Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan's press consultant, Akif Beki. Beki complained about the content of the news. The manager responded: "We're taking sides with the government in our news anyway. Even my father is not watching us anymore. We're just trying to look objective. This is also better for you. Please try to understand this."

Another journalist from the same TV channel notes that the pressure grew from bad to worse with each new channel manager:

Cem Aydın passed over the position [as the manager] to Kemal Can, Kemal Can passed it over to Mirgün Cabas and he passed it over to Mustafa Hoş. After that it turned into a mess. Cem Aydın was the one to deflect the blows from us the most. Kemal Can was like a buffer zone. After Kemal Can, the pressure to Mirgün

increased. He tried to go along with them. I remember their fights with Banu Güven [an anchorwoman who was dismissed from the channel in 2011]. With Mustafa Hoş it all came to an end. That was the summer of 2009.

The editorial director of *Radikal İki*, the weekend supplement of the daily *Radikal*, also notes that Akif Beki, the prime minister's press advisor who was also a columnist in *Radikal*, would not leave the office of the chief editor of the newspaper. Interventions to the editorial policy of the newspaper, he implies had reached a peak (Özvarış 2014). He notes that although these things can never be known for sure, the rumor – “the newspaper of whisper” as he calls it -- was that the reason for the owner of the *Radikal* to change the chief editor of the newspaper in 2009 and appoint someone who was allegedly closely linked with the Gülen community was that he thought “let's also have someone like that” (Özvarış 2014c).

Shortly before the Doğan Group was fined in 2009 Aydın Doğan explained to columnist Bekir Coşkun that he had received a list of those who were going to be dismissed. Coşkun was the second on the list and Oktay Ekşi, who also lost his job, was the third (Coşkun 2011, 49). Coşkun also notes that a year later, shortly before the 2010 referendum, a similar list was sent to Turgay Ciner, the owner of *Habertürk* (Coşkun 2011, 91). In his account, his criticisms directed at the party in the course of the referendum broke the camel's back and he was dismissed during the week after the referendum when the AKP's position in the referendum was declared the winner (Coşkun 2011, 105).

Here I should note that dismissals of prominent columnists became a point of negotiation in economic deals between the media owners and the AKP politicians. In 2009, upon Coşkun's dismissal from *Habertürk*, CHP MP Şahin Mengü presented a parliamentary

question (docket no. 7/16405) to the prime minister. He asked, (i) if any of Ciner Holding's business groups in energy, mining, media, industry or trade had signed an agreement with one of the ministries around the date of Coşkun's dismissal, and (ii) if any of Ciner Holding's demands from public institutions were realized around the date of Coşkun's dismissal. Coşkun notes that a few days after this question CHP MP Turgut Dibek made a motion stating that the coal mine managed by the Ciner group was tendered by the Ministry of Energy, which gave the opportunity to expropriate Ciner's right to manage the mine. A day after Coşkun's dismissal the tender was given to Ciner Group. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources declined the allegations that there was a relationship between Coşkun's dismissal and the tender process (The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources 2010).

After 2009 a number of journalists closely affiliated with the party began to work at mainstream media stations. These journalists were mainly columnists. One example is the appointment of Akif Beki, one of the prime minister's press advisors, as a columnist at *Hürriyet*⁵⁷. While these columnists' positions and interpretations did not dominate the atmosphere in the newspaper, their appointment said much about the shift in the dynamics within the newspaper.

In other cases, affiliates of the party were appointed into managerial positions. Fatih Altaylı, the chief editor of *Habertürk* between (2009-2014), notes that he's well aware that the authorities have pressured his boss multiple times to dismiss him, and later a venue was found through the appointment of Fatih Saraç as a manager in 2011. Fatih Saraç is the son of

⁵⁷ Beki, who was said to have bought an apartment house in the same building where the prime minister resides, notes in one of his interviews that being in the same building is a coincidence. But he adds that his family and the prime minister's family also meet one another as neighbors from the same building (Arman 2009b).

the Naqshbandi Sheikh, Emin Saraç, who is known to be a mentor to the prime minister in his youth (Diken 2014a). In 2012, Saraç also established a supermarket chain with the owner of *Habertürk* and later he was made the deputy chairman of the executive board of *Habertürk* (Diken 2014a). The chief editor of *Habertürk*, Fatih Altaylı, claims that after the appointment of Fatih Saraç he wanted to leave but the boss did not let him go. In his account, after Saraç's appointment, they were in a constant struggle (Özvarış 2015b).

The replacement of secular columnists by more conservative ones was an affirmation of religious identity by the bosses excluded for their secular secularist stance by the political authority. Performances of religiosity by prominent secular figures of mainstream media outlets such as visiting Mecca for pilgrimage served the same function.

In 2009, in the context of the tax fine imposed on Doğan Group, the pressure reached a degree that the chief editor of *Hürriyet*, Ertuğrul Özkök, had to leave his post after 20 years of service in the same position. While Özkök claimed to have resigned from his post at his own will there was public agreement that he was forced to resign (Akın 2009). One of my interviewees in close circles with Özkök also mentioned that the atmosphere in which Özkök left his position was one of fear, where the AKP “had frightened the owners of the newspapers” and was forcing them to retreats⁵⁸. Similarly, Derya Sazak, who was the chief editor of *Milliyet*, argues that Hüseyin Çelik, a prominent AKP politician once explained to one of the lead figures of the newspaper that if the managers at *Milliyet* were not changed, they would not receive any news. Upon this incident, Sazak was fired by the owner Demirören, and Fikret Bila, who replaced Sazak, had fired the journalist Can Dündar.

⁵⁸ “With Ertuğrul, they clearly forced him to leave. In our conversation, I told Ertuğrul, this is good for you. He said, why good, I could have served for another five years. I told him that he did good enough.” Interview with a journalist in close circles with Özkök.

Other indicative examples were documented by journalists. Akın (2009) notes that in 2009, Demirören, the businessmen who bought the daily *Milliyet* from the Doğan Group after the tax fine imposed on the group, called the prime minister to ask who to appoint as the head of the media group. The prime minister reportedly named one of his press advisors. Another example is documented by Dağıstanlı (2014). Accordingly, at around 1 am in the midnight, the owner of *Akşam*, *Show TV* and *Digitürk*, Mehmet Emin Karamahmet, received a call directly from Prime Minister Erdoğan. Erdoğan asked Karamahmet about a news story that had appeared in his newspaper *Akşam*. Karamahmet answered that he had not read the news and Erdoğan then got angry at him for not reading the newspaper that he owned. The next day Karamahmet told prominent journalists at his newspaper that he did not want to receive such phone calls and that they should make sure that he would not get such phone calls.

In 2013, public smearing and private phone calls were combined in an incident where not only a journalist and a newspaper but the entire profession was described as working against the interests of the nation. *Milliyet* had published the records of the BDP delegation's meeting with Abdullah Öcalan, "İmralı Tutanakları."⁵⁹ Upon the publication of the records, politicians, including the prime minister, fiercely criticized the newspaper. The next day, a major columnist of the newspaper, Hasan Cemal, defended the headlines of *Milliyet* and noted that the politicians should mind their own businesses and that they should not intervene into journalism (Cemal 2013). Upon the publication of this column, Erdoğan slandered both

⁵⁹ In February 2013, a group from the BDP went to Abdullah Öcalan's prison on İmralı Island. The delegation, which was granted special authorization by the Ministry of Justice to hold deliberations with Abdullah Öcalan, heard out the PKK leader's proposed roadmap for the Kurdish question. Öcalan also passed on letters to Kandil, the PKK's European administration and to the public via the BDP delegation. In the same week, the daily *Milliyet* published a story claiming to be what was partially discussed between imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the three members of the delegation.

the newspaper and the columnist in a public speech. Once again he described the two as a historical enemy of the AKP and therefore of the nation:

I always said that some newspapers have never supported us. This columnist writes that governing the state is a different business than putting together a newspaper. If you have a little consideration for this country, for this nation, if you want to contribute to the peace process you cannot make such news, you should not have made such news ... If this is the kind of journalism you want to make, to hell with your journalism! (T24 2013)

Akın (2013) notes that Erdoğan later called the owner of the newspaper, Demirören. He further writes that Demirören had told the chief editor of the time that he cried after Erdoğan's call and that he was never ever in his life scolded with such scorching words (Akın 2013). Following the call, the columnist engaging in the quarrel with Erdoğan was first made to stop writing his column for two weeks. When he was back after two weeks with a new column, he was censored and he quit writing his column.

These public speeches associated individual journalists with the political enemies defined in the political trials. Media owners already under pressure through transfer of ownerships dismissed those journalists. In this vein, public defamations turned into a tool for changing the power positions of individual journalists within the field of journalism.

More often than not the phone calls from the AKP would be about the content of the news, and the pressures on the media elite would diffuse one-by-one to the lower layers of the media outlet -- that is from the owner to the manager, from the manager to the editors, from the editors to the journalists. Ayşenur Arslan from *CNNTurk* confirms that as a result of such phone calls from both the AKP and the members of the Gülen Group, the editors

received multiple warnings from the channel owners. These warnings often sounded like “Please do not make us call you!” (Dağıstanlı, 2013, p. 147). She notes that chief editors would often say: “The boss yells at me and I am yelling at you. Don’t make them call me to complain!” (Dağıstanlı 2014, 148). Another journalist explains the way it works in the newspaper:

There are no news or no comments on some topics. This works through direct commands to the owner or the newspaper manager or the chief editor. These [commands] are then obviously transmitted to lower ranks in the organizational hierarchy. They say to the secretariat or to the journalists “let’s not put this, let’s not have a big coverage of Kılıçdaroğlu [the leader of the opposition party CHP] etc.”

A prominent journalist similarly explains how he witnessed such a moment during a live talk show:

I was at a program at Kanal 24 with Mustafa Karaalioğlu, Akif Beki, Ali Bayramoğlu. He [the Prime Minister] calls Akif Beki. Akif Beki was a manager at the time. He calls him during the program break and tells him: “Akif, our Mustafa is weak vis-à-vis these, don’t let them show up in your program.”

A journalist who worked in the pro-government daily *Star* for seven years (2007-2014) notes that the phone calls to his newspaper came primarily from the Prime Minister’s office. Specifically he says:

The newspaper is so close to the prime minister that it cannot be close to the president. Except for extraordinary circumstances, it is not desired to publish the president larger than the prime minister. The hierarchy starts from the prime

minister. For instance, about three years ago, crucial parts of an interview conducted with the president were not published in the newspaper with the idea that the prime minister could be disturbed. (Özvarış 2014)

Under these circumstances, the journalists who refused to back down in the face of intimidation were purged or forced to resign. For instance, in a case from 2010, the then news coordinator of NTV, Mustafa Hoş, reported the detainment of the Erzincan (a city in Turkey) Chief Prosecutor on the grounds of alleged membership to Ergenekon with the headline “Blockade at the Erzincan courthouse”. The Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç then blamed the channel in a press statement:

If the location [of the arrest] is a workplace, and his [the prosecutor’s] workplace is a room in a courthouse, one cannot say “the room was raided.” One of the most important TV channels of Turkey is taking advantage [of this language] on purpose. It says, “the office of the public prosecution was raided”. It says, “the courthouse was raided”. Shame on you! This is not a raid. This is very impertinent [referring to how the channel presents the news]. What they [actually] have to do is this: “A search with a search warrant was carried out at the workplace of the Chief Prosecutor”. This is the language of law: “carrying out a search”. But what is it in the language of a hobo? “Raiding.” It’s because they are used to raids. They come from the coup tradition. They are used to raids. They all think about raiding. But it goes over their heads. A lot has changed in Turkey.

At the channel, the news coordinator who had entered the headline for the news was pressured to change the headline by Sadullah Ergin, the Minister of Justice, and Bülent

Arınç, the Deputy Prime Minister, through the channel managers. The news coordinator, however, resisted and kept the headline. Yet, when he left the channel the headline was changed into “Judicial Crisis”. Then the news coordinator resigned from his post. Two days after his resignation, the deputy prime minister visited the channel and noted: “Now it looks like a nice news bureau” (T24 2017).

In less known cases the journalists would immediately be fired. For instance, in one incident, a journalist had asked a question to a prominent AKP politician, and the politician responded: “your mouth smells of alcohol, how dare you ask me questions.” This journalist was then dismissed. Similarly, there is the allegation that during the mine disaster at Soma, the prime minister had slapped someone in the face⁶⁰. All journalists working on the issue were then moved to other positions or dismissed.

I should also note that the AKP has owned and continued the practice of accreditation that was started by the military in the February 28 Process. The primary consultant of President Gül, who worked in that position for 12 years, notes that the prime minister’s press consultant allegedly asked the president to ban the journalists, who were already banned from the prime ministry, from access to the presidency as well (Özvarış 2015d). He notes that the prime ministry has canceled the accreditations of seven journalists from *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Star TV*, *Akşam*, *Vatan* and *Evrensel* in 2007. When two of those reporters began to work at the presidency, the prime minister’s press consultant called and asked for cancelation of their accreditation. In another incident, a newspaper published the news that the policemen working to protect the prime minister’s office had left it unattended during the time slot in

⁶⁰ There is a video where the prime minister says “if you boo the prime minister of this country you get slapped in the face!”

which the Ramadan fast is broken. Upon the publication of this news, the prime minister's office had started accreditation for reporters working at the prime minister's office, and those that were unwanted at the prime ministry were no longer allowed to work there⁶¹.

Conclusion

Between 2002 and 2007, the ruling party reconfigured political power structures through the reforms undertaken in the context of the EU accession and the IMF recovery programs. In journalism such reconfiguration did not amount to a destabilization. Both secular and religious businessmen benefited from the liberal economic reforms that amended restrictions on media ownership and maintained the rent-seeking relationships of the previous period with the government.

Starting with 2007, however, political trials, transfers in media ownerships and public smearing of news outlets and journalists helped skew the power relationships in journalism to the advantage of the AKP and its supporters. The political trials set the discourse of “the nation and its enemies”. Accordingly, the two enemies of the nation were “the corrupt crime networks that had historically oppressed the national will”, and “the terrorists that strived to divide the unity of the nation”. By associating journalists and media outlets with either staunch secularists or Kurds, the two political enemies, the trials also stigmatized the conduct of the press as a threat to the nation if it opposed the AKP, the so-called representative of the nation's will.

The discourse set by the political trials was also used in the transfer of ownerships and in smearing of individual journalists. In the former case, non-compliant business circles

⁶¹ Interview with a journalist.

were categorized as corrupt forces. The seizure of their assets and the fines directed against them were presented as part of a purge and as a means to justice. In the latter case, influential journalists were categorized as terrorists in public speeches and thereby made to leave their posts.

As a consequence of monopolization of political power in the hands of the AKP through the electoral process, and the reward-to-supporters challenge-to-opponents strategy in the journalistic field, media owners could no longer compete for alignment with different camps in politics. Media outlets owned by secularist businessmen hence gradually submitted to the AKP by adjusting their news content. It is in this context that newspapers became ideologically more biased and internally less plural (Çarkoğlu and Yavuz 2010). As a journalist succinctly puts into words, “In the 1990s, it would be possible to get a complete picture by reading two competing media outlets. Since 2007, however the headlines turned into slogans, and now even if we read all camps it is not possible to capture different aspects of the same story” (Dağıstanlı 2013).

Clearly, the disturbance of power hierarchies in the press shook journalists’ perceptions of who now holds power in politics and the media. Journalists had to pick their sides as either “proponents” or “opponents” of the government –at least in their professional practices. In the subsequent chapters, I use interview data to show how journalists of various political identities came to interpret their professional positions and their professional conduct in the context of the destabilization of power hierarchies.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DESTABILIZATION: POLITICAL IDENTITY AND STATUS POSITION

“This entire process slowly transformed the atmosphere within the organization. That atmosphere is no longer one that you would want to be part of. Because of the nature of journalism, people who work in news outlets can not hide their political views. This is a job that you do with words, with ideas. You constantly discuss, say your views, one says “this is wrong”, the other says “no, its not wrong.” This is how the editorial office works. But when you start feeling isolated because of your views you can no longer do your job.”

Interview with a journalist

In the previous chapters I took a closer look at the structure of the professional settings of journalists in Turkey, the relationship between journalism and politics, and the ways state actors have destabilized the hierarchies among political actors and the press in the

country in the last decade. Pierre Bourdieu and other field theorists such as Neil Fligstein and Doug McAdam (2012) have argued that changes in a particular field are made possible by external factors such as political breaks or technological, economic or demographic changes. Along those lines, now I present the destabilization of power hierarchies as an external factor that transformed the field of journalism by affecting journalists' meaning worlds.

In the next two chapters, I ask: how were these acts of destabilization interpreted by journalists? How did this destabilization influence the meaning worlds of journalists? Did all journalists feel the same towards these acts or did these practices have varying effects on journalists? When I ask these questions, I am looking for two things: first, a narrative of how journalists made sense of the destabilization going on in politics, and second, the source of the variation in their interpretations.

This chapter, in particular, focuses on the roots of the variation in journalists' interpretation of the destabilization. The variation is explained on the basis of journalists' political identities. I suggest that journalists with varying political identities had varying experiences of the destabilization particularly with regards to shifts in their status positions vis-à-vis the political authority. The next chapter then delves into the emotional interpretations of journalists and how these emotional interpretations overlap with journalists' political identities and the shifts in their status positions.

The chapter relies primarily on the in-depth interviews that I conducted with journalists. In addition to my own interviews, I also refer to interviews that were conducted with journalists by other journalists. In the interviews, journalists noted that there always was pressure on Turkish journalism while the degree to which it was felt varied across political groups and across periods of repression. To express their political identities journalists

referred to particular periods of past state repression and compared their professional experiences in the contemporary period to their experiences during these periods of repression.

Scholars note that references to past are indispensable elements of collective identity processes (Olick 1999, Armstrong and Cragg 2006, Jansen 2007, Spillman 1998). For instance, they have shown that movement participants invoke the past during interactions in such a way to confirm and assert their political identities in the present (Gongaware 2010). In my interviews journalists also anchored their political identities to past periods of repression. Moreover, through comparisons over time they presented an interpretation of the destabilization of power hierarchies.

For instance, while leftist journalists described their contemporary experiences as worse than their experiences during the 1980s coup d'état, conservative-religious journalists described their contemporary experiences as an improvement in comparison to their experiences during the February 28 Process. These comparisons generally highlighted a shift/continuity in status position. In other words, when journalists talked of destabilization they described the transformation in their personal experiences in terms of a loss, an improvement or a continuation of their relative status vis-à-vis the political authority or vis-à-vis the journalists with different political identities.

In what follows, I take references to particular periods of repression along with subjective descriptions of political orientation as bases of journalists' political identities. Given that journalists with similar political identities generally worked at similar media outlets, I organize the chapter into three subsections according to three groups of media outlets that existed between 2002-2013: 1) mainstream media, comprised of media outlets

owned by secular businessmen 2) proponent media, comprised of media outlets owned by proponent businessmen 3) independent media, comprised of media outlets owned by smaller groups (See Table 4. For overlaps between status changes, political identity and past periods of repression cited by journalists).

Table 4. Political Identity & Status Shifts

Group	Political Identity	Previous Repressive Period	Status Shift
Mainstream Media	Secularist, apolitical Leftist	1980, Coup D’etat 1990s, Conflict between the PKK and the military	Status Loss
Proponent Media	Conservative-religious Liberal	1997, February 28	Status Gain
Independent Media	Leftist Kurdish	1980, Coup D’etat 1990s, Conflict between the PKK and the military	Status Unchanged

In general, this approach resembles to the relative deprivation theories. Accordingly, feelings of deprivation are caused by disappointing comparisons with one’s own past (that is, when the trajectory of one’s life suddenly deviates from the expected) or with social reference groups (that is, when one’s ingroup is negatively evaluated in comparison with significant outgroups) (Gurr 1970). While research building on relative deprivation thesis has been operationalized mostly in terms of status loss (or fear of loss of status) on economic grounds (Bell 2002, Lipset 1959), in my argument I also emphasize status shifts experienced as part of a political identity group in effect of political destabilization.

Mainstream Media: Status Loss

The journalists that are addressed in this section work in the mainstream media outlets of *CNN Türk*, *Hürriyet*, *NTV*, *Habertürk*, and *Radikal*. These journalists generally compare their contemporary position in the field of journalism to their position in the field during two past periods of political repression, namely the 1980 coup d'état and the armed conflict between the PKK and the military. They usually find the contemporary period worse than the past periods. One journalist, for instance, refers to the 1980 coup d'état when he notes that the claim of the contemporary period on democracy makes it worse than the period of military rule:

Back then [during the military rule] there was no claim to democracy. So, pressures were to some extent expected. The time of the AKP in contrast is the time that we talk of democracy and democratization most. There is no martial law, no state of exception, why do we have these pressures then! The prime minister says to media owners, you are paying for these journalists, fire them! That's how he talks in public squares!

Another journalist refers to the period of armed conflict between the military and the PKK when he likens the AKP to the military that expected journalists to take sides with the state:

In those days we called it censorship decrees. It was the time of Özal. They wanted the journalists to report on the southeast as if they were reporting on a national soccer game. Just the way Tayyip Erdoğan gathers journalists, so would Özal gather them. He [Özal] wanted them to see the conflict from the eyes of the

*state, just like they would do in watching a national game. It's the same mentality [today]. They constantly say: Don't show the weaknesses of the state."*⁶²

Journalists who note that the contemporary period is worse than the period of the coup usually emphasize that in the past journalists knew the exact orders and measures of the military authority. Now, in contrast, is a time of "lawlessness." Journalists, who compare the contemporary period to the time of armed conflict during the 1990s, on the other hand, note that while the amount of pressure faced by the journalists was more severe then, they nevertheless were able to practice journalism. One journalist for instance explains: "Yes, I can say that [during the 1990s] it was not journalism as it should be. But the kinds of news that are censored in the mainstream media today could at least be published then."

Among the two past periods of repression, the former is cited more often than the latter in journalists' narratives. This can be explained by the difference in the level of pressure experienced by the mainstream media in these two periods. While during the 1980 coup d'état the entire media was under repression, during the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military, those who ideologically sided with the military or remained apolitical over the issue in the mainstream media were able to escape direct effects of the repression. A journalist who entered the profession in the 1990s explicitly notes that up to the 2000s working in the mainstream media had made him subject to relatively less direct state pressure:

⁶² Upon the prime minister's 2011 meeting with the owners and representatives of mainstream and proponent media outlets, *Milliyet* columnist Hasan Cemal similarly noted that the meeting, where news outlets were asked to be cautious in their news on terror and violence, resembled to the meeting held by President Özal in April 6, 1990 on "PKK, Southeast and the Press". He added that in 21 years not much had changed in Turkey (Cemal 2011).

The pressure didn't start anew. There always was pressure. In the 1990s there was pressure on the Kurds and on the Islamists. Because I always worked at "newspapers that are close to the government" [referring to the mainstream media outlets] I didn't directly experience that kind of pressure. I realized the difference when I witnessed what happened at Özgür Gündem [in 1994]. I was on duty on the night Özgür Gündem was bombed. Their reporters were always under severe pressure. They faced the risk of being kidnapped, being forcibly lost. That's how they lived until very recently. Islamists were not liked much, either. In the MGK meetings or in the briefings by the military they would not be accredited. They experienced the pressure that we experience now, back then. In that sense, Turkish media has never been free. But then again I am not sure if it ever got this bad.

In all these accounts, the contemporary period is defined as the worst period of all periods of repression. The government's policies towards non-proponent news outlets and particularly towards the mainstream media are described as "you'll either be mine or you'll be wiped out" policies. Seizure of media outlets, establishment of proponent media outlets, the use of tax fines, legal accusations and slandering of journalists are all examples. Moreover, according to the journalists, what differentiates this era from previous periods of repression is the proponent media that has been built through "you'll either be mine or you'll be wiped out" policies:

We never saw this before. This government has built its own media, this is a first. Turgut Özal [a former prime minister and president from the 1980s] would also get mad at the daily Cumhuriyet. Tansu Çiller [a former prime minister from the

1990s] tried to have her own newspaper published. [But] this is a different era. We are talking of a much more serious thing when we compare it to the past. ... We hadn't seen such a thing that built its own media before. The EU progress reports mention this. For the first time in history, in 2012 and 2013 they mentioned these [proponent] outlets as a hindrance on freedom of expression in Turkey.

These narratives underscore the way the field of journalism was skewed to the advantage of the government with the emergence of proponent outlets. When journalists speak of the thick relations between the owners of the proponent media outlets and the ruling party as the differentiating feature of the proponent media, they highlight the favoritism in the government's relationship with the proponent outlets:

We do not know who the actual shareholders [of the rising proponent media outlets] are. This is a non-transparent structure. ... Under such a structure, these outlets are entirely linked, fully dependent on the party. They are in the orbit of the party.

This favoritism is interpreted as an indication of the disempowerment of secular media outlets vis-à-vis the government:

If we compare the organizational structure of the media in general with the organizational structure of the media in the past, there is not really a difference. Media groups are structured in the same way as they were in the 1990s and early 2000s. There is only one difference and that is in the direction [of the relationship between the media and politics]. In the 1990s, group medias would intervene in politics, try to govern politics, give a direction to politics. The groups owned

banks and they also owned TVs, newspapers. So they would say, don't let that person become a minister, let's make this person a prime minister. ... Now, it's the exact opposite. Today we have a structure that decides who is going to write at which newspaper, who should not write etc. The language of this politics has adopted the language of the state. Imagine, they blame everyone of being a traitor, a spy. They pressure the [mainstream] media owners with money.

Similarly, another journalist notes that in the 1990s media owners were so strong that they would topple down governments in a single week. Nowadays the owners have lost their power and submitted to political authority. He describes the acts of the current government as acts of revenge on the mainstream media:

They [politicians of the currently ruling party] experienced pressure back then [in the 1990s]. Now they do it to us. They take revenge.... Back in the 1990s the media owners were strong. Imagine they made a decision and toppled down Tansu Çiller [a prime minister of the time] in a single week. They used to be strong. Now they submit to pressure.

A senior columnist highlights status loss when he noted that back in the 1990s they would be so respected by the politicians that prime ministers would personally respond to their phone calls or stand up to say “hi” when they entered the room. He adds that the times have changed for them:

In the 1990s politics in Turkey was very fragmented. The country was ruled by weak coalition governments and this weakness on behalf of politicians had turned the media owners into emperors. We [prominent journalists] were like little kings. Prime ministers would stand up when they saw us, let alone the media owners.

Prime ministers, politicians would respond to our calls each time we would want to get in touch. And we would walk around in a pompous, pretentious manner. Well, when you compare it to now, it's very different... Now there is no fragmentation of power between the military, the president, the business world etc. There only exists one power holder, Tayyip Erdoğan.

Many prominent journalists claim to experience such status loss not because of their personal conflicts with the power holders but because of a clash of values between secularist journalists and conservative politicians – in other words, because of their political identities:

I used to quarrel with politicians in the 1980s, too. For example with Özal [the prime minister of the time]. But that was different. Back then we all had shared values. What were these? These were the flag, the Republic, laicism, Atatürk, national unity, development. This time it is different. Now we have serious divergences in fundamental values. We have different feelings. That's what makes this era different. For instance, at the time of Özal, he had sued me several times. At one stage, I had 10 ongoing law suits. One time, I was at the court during the day [because of a trial that he had filed against me]. In the evening, during a reception he approached me and told me "lets have our photo taken." He laughed and joked. Today it's different. When they see us they look like they have seen a snake. They feel like they should kill us. They don't say hi, nothing... We are treated like we are plagued. Not only politicians but academics, businessmen etc., all people who try to maintain their relations with the political authority avoid us. They don't want to be seen with us. That's because Tayyip Erdoğan has a unique thing. For instance, [let's assume that] the president of a university is seen with

me somewhere or [that] I give a talk at that university. That president is gone. He is discharged. So, they [those who are seen to interact with us] get punished. Exactly for this reason they canceled my talks at many universities. Or they don't provide a room for the talk even if students organize an event.

These journalists, who highlight the powerlessness of the mainstream media and the elite journalists of the mainstream media vis-à-vis the political authority, also note that the government's acts, which are designed to restructure the media, serve to sharpen the division between us and them, supporter and opponent. They claim to be treated as an enemy of the government. It is in this context that state measures such as establishment of proponent media outlets, use of tax fines against secular media owners and slandering of journalists are described as acts of revenge on "enemy journalists and outlets":

The mainstream had always acted against them [the AKP]. It had struggled against their rise. [The daily] Hürriyet was the forerunner. In this struggle they [the AKP] nursed a grudge against the mainstream. Hence when they acquired political power, they first wanted to take revenge and to take the media under their control. The moment they were elected in 2002, they set their agenda as creating their own media and silencing those against them. They employed different strategies to this end, and they succeeded in establishing their own TV channels, their newspapers. When this did not suffice, they used TMSF. They appropriated some media outlets via TMSF. When TMSF did not suffice, then they paid some businessmen and made them buy some newspapers. When this did not suffice, then they used tax fines and pressured the owners. In addition, they

*personally attacked some columnists and journalists trying to get them fired, and they succeeded*⁶³.

Political trials directed at journalists are also described as a means of attack on the “enemy”. Violations of privacy in the public discussion of the trials are particularly interpreted as a means of humiliating the “enemy”. For instance, in 2009, Uğur Dündar, who was the anchorman of *Star TV*, got mad on live TV when his wife was included in the Ergenekon indictment and details about his family life were made public through the broadcasts of proponent outlets on the Ergenekon indictment⁶⁴:

... Now look at this, dear audience, I am coming to the part [of the indictment] that actually hurt my heart: “I had serious pictures and documents about Uğur Dündar and Aydın Doğan. For instance, Uğur Dündar’s family relationships. His wife’s periodic travels to Brazil.” This and many other similar lies. These are slanders. Dear audience, if anyone slanders us we ask for pay off at the courts. My wife, after getting married, has never traveled abroad alone, and she never went to Brazil. If anyone can prove that my wife has traveled to Brazil during our marriage, I will resign at that moment. I could even commit suicide. This a matter of honor, dear audience. ... Dear audience, what does this have to do with

⁶³ Similar accounts are presented by other journalists. For instance, Doğan Akin notes that Erdoğan has been an enemy of particularly *Hürriyet* since the mid 1990s when he was elected as the mayor of Istanbul. See (Akin 2009) for more detail.

⁶⁴ A journalist who claims to have been charged by the husband of Tansu Çiller for investigating the private matters of Uğur Dündar, who at the time was after the corrupt affairs of the Çiller family, is invited as a witness to Ergenekon trial. In his statement at the trial he narrates on their conflicts during the 1990s and makes statements about Dündar’s family life. These details that do not have a connection with the trial are made public as the indictment is made public and pro-government newsoutlets make news about these details. This is why Dündar is angry.

Ergenekon! ... Recently, didn't Melih Gökçek [the mayor of the capital city, Ankara] threaten me to make life in Turkey unbearable to me? They got our friends beaten. He is pointing us as a target. Now, the judiciary is exposing our family honor, our honor... Esteemed prime minister, if a prosecutor were to slander you by noting that Mrs. Emine [referring to the prime minister's wife] is traveling often to Brazil, if he were to denigrate your family honor, what would you do? Dear minister of justice, whose honesty I always believe in, if you were slandered like this, if your family honor, your children's honor was denigrated what would you do? Dear Istanbul Chief Prosecutor of the Republic, esteemed Aykut Cengiz Engin, I am speaking to you, how could a prosecutor sign this document? How? Esteemed Çolakkadı [referring to the Deputy Chief Prosecutor] I am speaking to you, to the HSYK (Hakimler Savcular Yüksek Kurulu, High Council of Judges and Prosecutors), to all men of justice whose conscience has not become callous, whose courage is not fettered. If someone plays with our honor, we will pay off at the judiciary. But if it is the judiciary playing with our honor, what do we do then! What are we going to do. Come and kill us! What does this have to do with Ergenekon?! What?! I am asking!

Overall, in the accounts as this one, the government, the ruling party and the judiciary are presented as a single front that wages undue attacks on journalists. Taken together, journalists' emphasis on the emergence of proponent media outlets, disempowerment of secular media owners and the treatment of journalists as an enemy reflect a feeling of status loss on behalf of those who work in secular mainstream media outlets.

Proponent Media: Status Gain

In this section I address the journalists who work at proponent media outlets. The journalists whose narratives I use as evidence have worked for the news outlets *Sabah*, *YeniŞafak*, *Star*, *Zaman*, *YeniAkit* and *Kanal 7* between 2002 and 2013. These journalists can be placed into three categories based on their political identities. The first group comes from a religious-conservative background and is a staunch supporter of the government's policies. The second group does not come from such a background but nonetheless has long supported the ruling party's policies on the grounds that these policies disempowered the tutelary regime of the military-bureaucratic establishment of the pre-AKP state. Journalists in this second group generally define themselves as liberals, liberal-leftists, libertarians or democrats. Some journalists who work in the mainstream media or in critical independent media outlets refer to them as "useful idiots" or "genetically modified journalists" for embedding their journalism completely in the government's vision despite coming from a non-religious-conservative background. Finally, there is a third group of journalists in the outlets, which were seized by the TMSF and handed over to a proponent businessmen. This third group consists of journalists who have worked at these newspapers since the 1990s and continued to work at these outlets despite having views oppositional to the government. Below, in three different subsections, I present the political identities, the periods of repression referred by these journalists and their interpretations of the destabilization in terms of status shifts.

Conservative-religious journalists: Status Gain

The first group of journalists addressed in this section is composed of journalists who define themselves on a spectrum ranging from being religious-conservative to being

Islamists. These journalists generally address the February 28 Process as the period in which they experienced major state repression in the past:

I decided to become a journalist during the February 28 Process. In that period I became aware that I was a person that the state perceived as a threat. ... I actually grew up in a neighborhood that was also inhabited by soldiers and their families. We lived together. It is during the February 28 Process that I realized that we were different, that we lived together but belonged to different worlds. And the mainstream media played a big role in creating this effect.

While these journalists commonly refer to the February 28 Process as the major period of state repression, they hardly mention the military rule between 1980 and 1983 or the armed conflict over the 1990s between the PKK and the military as a period of repression that affected their journalistic conduct.

In these accounts, the differentiating feature of the contemporary period is the democratic awakening brought about by the ruling party and the proponent outlets against the previous unjust order of the military and its long-time ally, the mainstream media. Much like their counterparts in the mainstream media, they single out the rise of proponent outlets as the major characteristic of the media in the 2000s. However, these journalists' sentiments towards these outlets significantly differ from their counterparts working in the mainstream media.

These journalists draw a clear distinction between the outlets that make up the "old media order" and the outlets that make up the "rising media order." In many accounts, the former is described as the secularist media outlets that supported military action against the religious party during the February 28 Process through their news. The "old" mainstream

media is said to have desired to continue with the corrupt ways of engaging in a rent relationship with the prime minister. When they were not allowed by the prime minister to engage in rent seeking relationships, they are said to have tried to underhandedly bring the prime minister to his knees (Ongun 2015). In this context, the outlets that are part of the “old” media order are claimed to be rejecting the reality that a new media order has now dominated them, and they are described to be acting to prevent the further rise of the “new” media order. Accordingly, “partisan”, “Islamist”, “reactionary” or “bigot” are stigmas instrumentalized by these “old” media outlets to denigrate the “new” outlets and prevent the rise of the “new” democratic journalistic style (Karaalioğlu 2012).

The “new” media order, on the other hand, is described by the religious-conservative journalists as a democratic movement that resisted military action during the February 28 Process. They also note that the new style of journalism that emerged as part of the “new” media order is a response to the military intervention during the February 28 Process and has become dominant by 2012. Prominent journalists such as the editor in chief of the daily *Star* between 2007 and 2014 define the rising style as “democratic, multi-vocal and creative” (Karaalioğlu 2012). Similarly, one of the prominent columnists, who was among the founding chief editors of *Yeni Şafak* during the 28 February Process, describes *Yeni Şafak* as a newspaper that welcomes diversity (Özvarış 2012).

Overall, religious-conservative journalists label the “old” media order as corrupt and unjust, and the “new” media order as democratic. In drawing this distinction between the “unjust old” and the “democratic new”, the inclusion of the religious journalists into the field of journalism through proponent media outlets is cited as a sign of being democratic. Many underline the discrimination that religious journalists face at “secularist” outlets. A veiled

journalist, who defines herself as a religious-conservative, for instance, presents how she groups media outlets into two as those that would not hire her because she wears a headscarf, and those that would hire her:

So when I finished school and began to apply for jobs I never thought about applying to any of those media outlets [referring to the mainstream media outlets]. I thought I would have a chance [to find a job] only at the daily Türkiye, Zaman or Yeni Şafak, or Kanal 7.

Another veiled journalist, who also defines herself as conservative-religious, notes that when she started the profession in the early 2000s as a veiled woman she would have a chance to find a job only at conservative media outlets such as “Samanyolu TV, Kanal 7, Yeni Şafak, İhlas News Agency, or TGRT.”

The press advisor of the prime minister, who after his duty as the press advisor returned to the media and began to work as a journalist, similarly refers to the skewedness of the “old” system against the religious-conservative as he responds to the people who criticize him for returning to the media after working as a press advisor:

You know what is weird? If I had engaged in active politics at CHP, I would not have encountered these [criticisms about skewedness of my professional practice]. This is the media structure that exists. [The media] sees the CHP as more compatible with the genetics of today’s media. They [the CHP] are from the family, they are from within. Those who dominate the current media are all from the tradition of the daily Cumhuriyet. There are hardships caused by this. Here one should ask “how just and how objective they are?” This is the problem we have in this country. Even if I had not worked as a press advisor those who talk

after me today, would still be talking after me. One group of media [referring to the mainstream] constantly accuses the other media [referring to the proponents] of partisanship. Have all those that are labeled as partisans worked as press councillor at the prime ministry? ... The problem is not that I worked as a councillor at the prime ministry for three years. The problem is that I have never worked at Cumhuriyet. If you were to ask if I am sad for disturbing the environment... No, I am not sad for disturbing the environment. I even secretly enjoy it! (Bahar 2009).

The distinction between the two groups of media outlets, the “old” and the “rising”, is also highlighted when journalists accuse business circles that financially support the “old” media for excluding the religious. For instance, the chief editor of the daily *Star* between 2007 and 2014 accuses the businessmen, who pay for the advertisements at the “old” outlets, of not advertising in the rising “democratic and reformist” media outlets. In these accounts, these businessmen and the “old” outlets are affiliated with one another through a “class consciousness” and are trying to protect the privileges guaranteed by the “old order”. These journalists further claim that these acts resemble to the support these businessmen allegedly had provided for the military during the February 28 Process against the religious-conservative (Karaalioğlu 2012). In an interview, a proponent businessmen, Ethem Sancak, who owns multiple proponent media outlets, similarly notes that TUSIAD had unwritten rules for accepting businessmen, and that these rules were drinking wine and not performing the prayer (Vatan 2013). With this statement he emphasizes that religious-conservative businessmen, who did not drink wine and performed the prayer because of their religious beliefs, had purposefully been excluded from the businessmen association.

This emphasis on the exclusion of the religious by the secular dominates the thinking of journalists at all levels, and not only their thinking about the acts of journalists or businessmen but also their thinking about non-religious-conservative news sources. The narrative of a veiled journalist presents an example⁶⁵:

When I object to something [while talking to a news source], [they generalize their thoughts about me to the entire religious community, and say things such as] “these religious ones always act like this”, “these veiled women are all immoral”. When a non-veiled woman reacts to something, they think of her reaction as an individual reaction. But if a veiled woman reacts then they judge all veiled women for that reaction. They judge the entire newspaper. They judge all the conservatives.

In addition to emphasizing the non-discriminative attitude against the religious at proponent media outlets, journalists in this group also describe the “old” order as an extension of “foreign forces” and the “new” order as a “native” order:

Until recently there was an elitocracy in Turkey. This elitocracy was not made of the country’s native children. ... In Turkey, a very small minority shaped Turkey’s economy with TUSIAD. They used the sources of the country for the interests of global forces, for the interests of the system. In Turkey, the real government, is this invisible hand, this 350 people network. In Turkey there was an order instituted by NATO and the English secret service MI5 since the 1940s. They were the backbone of the deep state. (Özvarış 2012)

⁶⁵ Here I emphasize the veil of the journalists because it has a special place in their narratives, signifying their religiosity as well as the repression they encountered for being veiled.

These journalists embrace the inclusion of the “native” as a process that disempowers the “foreign forces” and their representatives among the “elite” in Turkey:

Now this structure is falling apart. This is a good development. Because they were controlled from abroad. This elitocracy is now changing. (Özvarış 2012)

Overall, journalists who describe themselves as religious-conservatives, embrace this shift from the “old” to the “new” order as an empowerment of the native-religious against the elite-secularists. A journalist, who defines himself as an Islamist and a supporter of sharia rule, explicitly notes:

I think the worries [of the secularists that the secularists’ rights are being limited] are not right. Which rights of the secularists are being repressed? What are the interventions in their life styles? What [actually] happens is this: they [the secularists] cannot accept that the Islamic community that they had been oppressing for years is now obtaining its rights. ... In the past, there was a firm Kemalist structure. International help was needed to break with this structure. The AKP used the EU as a point of support [for that]. (Özvarış 2015d)

Liberal Journalists: Empowerment

The second group of journalists, who worked at proponent media outlets, define themselves as liberals, democrats, liberal-leftists or libertarians who were discontent with the policies of the pre-AKP Turkish state. Much like the conservative-religious journalists they distinguish the “old” media order from the “new”. This distinction overlaps with the news outlets that supported the military during the February 28 Process and those that opposed the military during the February 28 Process. In these accounts, the February 28 Process was a major period of state repression. In most explanations of why they supported the AKP, they

present themselves as victims of the February 28 Process. In fact, experiences of the February 28 Process is usually cited as the major reason that brought them together with the religious-conservative journalists.

Here I should note that while liberal journalists claim to share with the religious-conservatives the experience of victimhood during the February 28 Process, they nevertheless describe the media outlets, where they work at, as the media of the “Islamic community”, and not as one of their own:

I was against a Turkey divided into two as Islamic and laic. That’s why I did think of writing in [the newspaper of] the Islamic community. My goal was enabling the birth of an accurate politics. I never looked to the developments from the same angle as all other writers of Yeni Şafak. During the February 28 Process it was a good time to write about the media. Many who claim to regret their acts back then deserved to be analyzed. Because I was not from amongst the conservative community but from amongst the leftists, many around me asked: What are you doing there [at Yeni Şafak]. Later I heard that people in the circles of Yeni Şafak asked the same question, too: What is this man doing here? So, I was the first columnist to go from the leftist community to the other community. I thought this was a meaningful act. I thought a Turkey that does not overcome these divisions would not be able to solve any of its problems. (Özvarış 2013b)

Many among the liberal journalists say that they thought by writing in conservative newspapers they would be able to reach an audience that they do not otherwise have access to:

In Turkey there is a big Arab hostility. I was not like that. The fact that I, a modern looking, warm-hearted, excited woman shared the views of the pious community [in Turkey] made me quite appealing for them. I could fight with those [who hated the Arabs]. I was familiar with the issues [in the Arab world]. I knew Egypt quite well. They liked this. We respected one another. I was also excited because I was not familiar with the readers of that conservative newspaper. I attached particular importance to the fact that I was going to talk to a different community. ... I did not have a problem with being in that liberal line of thought. I thought of it as a challenge. I was told that especially the youth in small towns were interested in my pieces. When I heard that, I got more excited, I thought I can write to get these communities closer to one another.

These journalists note that at proponent media outlets everyone knows of one another's political identity and interacts accordingly:

At Sabah you exist with your political identity. Everyone looks at you with your political identity, whether you are a liberal leftist, an Islamist, an AKP supporter or a Gülen supporter.

A journalist notes that this creates a somewhat schizophrenic atmosphere:

It is strange. On the one hand, there is the owner who is from one community. On the other, we work there. And everyone knows one another[’s identity]. Some label me, saying that I am acting in a leftist manner. I don’t care. It’s a weird schizophrenic life.

These journalists, much like their mainstream and religious-conservative colleagues highlight the thick relationship between proponent businessmen and the government as the differentiating feature of the contemporary era:

At these institutions the relations of the owners with the government are very different than the secular media. Here the owners are much more dependent on the government. We see that this relationship has been instituted through a process in which Sabah and Akşam were seized and handed over to proponent businessmen.

According to the liberals, their presence at these institutions is decided primarily by the conservative-religious managers. They could write or work there so long they are in good relationship with the “Islamists”. One journalist explains how he continued to work at *Sabah* after the dismissal of the liberal chief editor:

They did not fire me because I was always respectful of the Islamists. And this was a sincere respect. I was not playing. For instance you cannot find a veiled woman working at a bank. Go to Yapı kredi [a bank in Turkey], is there a veiled woman working there? You cannot find any. İşbankası [another bank in Turkey], Akbank [another bank in Turkey], none have any veiled woman. Shame on them! I think this is discrimination. I think this [my views on discrimination of the religious] is why they did not sack me from Sabah⁶⁶. ... I believe this has helped

⁶⁶ He explains that this tradition of acknowledging the discrimination faced by the religious community goes back to the 1990s: “At the beginning of the 90s we would wait for Murat Belge’s words. I was at Helsinki Citizens Assembly. We would listen to them all the time. Murat Belge and Abdullah Dilipak would organize panels at Şişli, Gazi movietheater. I went to some of those. Abdurrahman Dilipak, Islamists, leftists were all there. In the meetings that I attended at Helsinki Citizens Assembly there were Ali Bulaç, Mete Tunçay, Murat Belge.

me at Sabah. Islamists have probably thought of me as a leftist close to Islamists, as a different leftist. I am not ashamed of this. I am behind my thoughts.

In these accounts working for the inclusion of the religious into the system is a sign of being democratic. In addition, for many among the liberal journalists, newspapers like *Yeni Şafak* were the most democratic during the February 28 Process because they opposed the military:

In my view Yeni Şafak was the most inclusive media during the February 28. It opened its pages to so many journalists who were dismissed from their jobs during the February 28. They did this until Turkey normalized to some extent in 2003. In those four years, Yeni Şafak was the most democratic newspaper in Turkey. It was also close with the AKP. It had an ideological proximity to the party. This overlapped with the newspapers' conservative editorial line. The newspaper stood in parallel with the government.

Accordingly, while opposing the military is the essential characteristic of being a democrat, the ideological proximity of a newspaper with the government in rule does not present a hindrance to being a democrat. An editor who defined himself as “libertarian leftist, an anti-Kemalist leftist, who since the late 1990s had serious problems with staunch Atatürkism” notes that when he started working at *Sabah*, *Sabah* was a liberal newspaper. He explains how much he liked working at *Sabah* at that time on the grounds that the newspaper was opposing the military:

We would listen to them in admiration. It's because of what I learned from them that I got rid of my vulgar leftism.”

I cannot forget. It was the morning of April 27 [2007]. You know the story about the election of the president. I was on my way to work. I bought the daily Sabah. At night the military had posted the memorandum on its web site, and I was following the news online. In the morning, I saw Sabah's headline: No to Coup! I was impressed. I said holy mother of God! This is awesome! It was the chief editor of the time who ran that headline. I thought I am standing on the accurate side [of the history].

For this journalist those years were a period of war between those that had an “obsession with laicite” and the AKP. In this narrative, the former group is often labeled as “white Turks” implying that it is an elite group that turns its back to the victimization of the religious:

At that time [around 2007], there still was a war between the white Turks and the AKP. The AKP had not yet established its ideological hegemony. This was a time of obsession with laicite, Republican Rallies, bans on the headscarf etc. Even those that we had considered to be leftists were supportive of these. We realized that they were not leftist at all! These people reproached me. They called me “liboş” [this means “soft and liberal.” Here, soft also implies not being manly enough]. I was trying to explain my stance. I was saying that it is not acceptable for the veiled to be banned from entry to university, that the veiled should also be able to work at newspapers, banks etc. These were, in my opinion, their basic human rights.

Much like the conservative-religious journalists in the proponent news outlets, the liberals thought that terms like “partisan” were stigmas instrumentalized by this elite group to exclude and to disempower their democratic stance:

I was not at peace with being called “partisan journalist”. I was in fact very much disturbed by this [labeling]. They were excluding me. They did not try to understand me or sympathize with me.

These journalists shared the feeling of empowerment against the “old” order of the military with their conservative-religious counterparts for much of the period between 2002 and 2013. For instance, a columnist, who defines himself as libertarian democrat and lists himself among the liberals in Turkey, Cengiz Çandar presents the developments in the period up to the 2013 Gezi Protests as a process of disempowering the military:

Those who are called liberals, the group that is called as liberals, are the ones who advocated that in Turkey democracy and liberty should be shaped in reference to EU criteria. These people had the ideological responsibility to oppose military tutelage. ... We did not support Erdoğan, but we supported a project. We said “Turkey should be a democratic country”, “There should not be military tutelage in Turkey”, “There should not be a ground for coup d’etat in Turkey” ... I supported the government and Erdoğan at the points, where I -- and many others, too -- thought that there was a chance for Turkey to head towards a free, democratic and pluralist future. ... Our interpretation was that we could become an agent of history in democratizing Turkey. (Özvarış 2016)

Many among these journalists explain that the Ergenekon trials and judicial action taken against the military have augmented their support for the AKP:

I do not believe in the idea that there is no such thing as Ergenekon. I don't know if its name was Ergenekon, or not, but can anyone say that in Turkey there was no tradition of coups and that this tradition did not try to take action in the beginning of the 2000s? There was a coup in 1960, there was a coup in 1971 --I am one of its victims--, in 1980 we had the most severe coup, the effects of which still persist, in 1997 there was a post-modern coup --I was one of the first degree victims of it. We also know that there was a community who builds on this coup tradition and is allergic to the new government. These [people] were once again in activation. And this group takes notes, keeps books and leaves traces [of such activation]. As if these [evidences] do not exist at all, and as if there is a completely innocent group, as if there is a judgement against completely innocent people and as if we are supporting such unjust execution! Is this picture right? This is the picture that they want to draw. They try to say that what happened [in the trials] was entirely wrong. Well, this country had a tradition of coups, there was a search for coups at the beginning of the 2000s and there is evidence for this. What we said or what we defended were not rambling ideas. They were based on experience. We experienced four coups. (Özvarış 2016)

While the conservative-religious and the liberals shared the feeling of empowerment vis-à-vis the military, I should also note that the relationship between the liberals and the religious-conservative began to deteriorate beginning in 2011. After 2011 prominent liberal columnists -- although few in number -- began reacting to the proponent newspapers, where they worked, and were dismissed as a consequence. A number of events triggered conflict in their relationship. For instance, Andrew Finkel, who was writing at the Gülenist *Today's*

Zaman since 2007, was fired in 2011 after he criticized in his column the censorship applied to the unpublished manuscript of Ahmet Şık's book "Imam's Army". Mahir Zeynalov, another journalist from *Zaman* at the time, explained Finkel's dismissal in August 2013 with the following words on his personal twitter account: "Do you know why we fired Andrew Finkel? Because he supported the coup plotters who tried to undermine the AK Party government." According to one liberal journalist, the relationship between the liberals and the AKP started to deteriorate after the referendum in September 2010. Another liberal journalist cites 2012 as the breaking point in their relationship with the religious-conservatives in the newspaper. In his account, Ahmet Altan's resignation from *Taraf* newspaper was the trigger:

Up to a point, the Islamists thought of me as a sort of weapon against the white Turks. But when the pact between the liberals and the AKP was disturbed so was our relationship. It should be in 2011 [He actually talks of 2012]. The time when Ahmet Altan resigned from Taraf. Up to that point they thought of me as a useful evil. They did not want to fire me. After that, things have changed and even though I was not fired I was laid on the shelf.

An experienced liberal journalist, who worked at *Sabah* and whose position within the newspaper has changed with the deterioration of the liberals' relations with the party, presented his changing situation as one of status loss:

When the managers were changed and rumors spread that the newspaper would be restructured, everyone thought that I was the decadent vizier, that I could be beheaded any moment, just like the viziers in the Ottoman palace. That's why all

the employees, reporters, who used to be in good relationship with me, moved away from me. That's how I experienced the sudden fall from grace.

Pointing again at status loss, another liberal journalist noted that when he was dismissed after 2013, his boss explicitly told him that their employment at the newspaper had been a matter of “toleration” and that the newspaper can no longer “tolerate” them. This journalist also added:

When they dismissed me, one of the managers in very close contact with the government gave the following reason: “you refused to take the position we offered you. This was perceived as a sign that you do not want to play a team game with us anymore.”

Overall, the liberals increasingly split with the AKP after 2011 and joined the ranks of non-proponent journalists. Correspondingly, depending on when they personally split with the AKP's position, in their narratives they usually cite 2011, 2012 or 2013 (especially the Gezi Protests) as a break in the AKP's attitude towards democracy and as the time when they started to lose status vis-a-vis the government and proponent journalists.

Long-standing Journalists: Status loss

In addition to religious-conservative and liberal journalists, there was a third group of journalists in the newsoutlets that were seized and handed over to proponent businessmen. These journalists had begun working at these organizations before the organizations changed hands. Because of inflexibility in the job market they had remained in these organizations. These journalists did not support the political stance of the ruling party but nonetheless continued to work at these outlets. They generally cite the 1980 coup d'état as the major repressive period in recent Turkish history to describe their contemporary experiences in the

media from a comparative perspective. Unlike the religious-conservatives or the liberals they do not derive their political agency as a journalist from the February 28 Process. Their experiences and their interpretations of the developments between 2002 and 2013 in many ways resemble the interpretations of the journalists who work in the mainstream media.

In general these journalists note that their status in the newspaper was affected primarily after the TMSF handed over their organization to proponent businessmen:

Getting treated differently or being judged for your political activism was not the case up until recently. Not even during the rule of TMSF. Only after Çalık bought the newspaper, and especially after Gezi.

The columnists with oppositional views to the ruling party early on realized that their political stance began to constitute a problem for the newsoutlet once the newsoutlet changed hands. An example is presented by an experienced columnist who had worked in *Milliyet* for over 35 years:

The editorial coordinator is telling me stories like “the family [which bought the newspaper in 2011] is holding a meeting upstairs, the situation does not look good, they may shut off the newspaper” ... But the chief editor had told me that I would be able to write anything I want. I know, they are against my “nationalist (ulusalcı)” stance, that’s what they are against. (Özvarış 2013)

This journalist also underscores the ways in which the relationships within the newspaper have changed as the newspaper’s ownership moved to a proponent businessmen:

I worked as an editorial director under Abdi İpekçi for over 20 years. Under such circumstances the chief editor would call the columnist and say “let’s make a deal.” ... Not publishing a column is ordinary in Bab-I Ali. The editorial board

may kindly intervene in a columnist's column. But the editor would not say "I don't want this column". He would call the columnist himself, he wouldn't let another person talk on behalf of him. If he talks directly at me, we can make a deal. A paragraph or a word may be changed. These are all done within the bounds of rules and kindness. ... This is the first time in 30 years that someone intervened in my column in this manner. (Özvarış 2013)

Other journalists noted that the transfer of ownership affected the higher ranks in the newspaper more and the lower ranks less. A journalist who joined Sabah in the late 1980s and identifies as a leftist was dismissed after the 2013 Gezi protests. He explains the transformation in the newspaper:

The transformation was felt harshly within the newspaper at the level of everyday relations. The transformation starts from above. Regular journalists do not have an everyday relationship with the boss. When the boss changes, he first changes the people that he directly works with. First, there is no effect at the bottom. The columnists are affected the most because the columnists signal the view of the newspaper. In the departments, people continue to work and their views are not reflected in the newspapers.

These journalists note that the transfer of ownerships has led to a transformation in the understanding of the relationship between politics and journalism at these outlets. One journalist gives the following example:

For instance in the past they would not let the chief editorial figures to be directly affiliated with a party. I am not saying this for ordinary journalists but managing

figures. They would ask these figures to resign from either one of the positions. But now this is also changing.

In addition, the journalists note that they felt they were used for the transfer of professional knowledge from one social group to another during the transition period. One journalist explains how he was told to teach the profession to newly appointed religious-conservative cadres:

In our department, the general director, the vice general director and the manager changed. In this last period young boys were hired, as well. We can call them “the boys of the new period.” When they come they are usually labeled as “cemaat boys” [such labeling denotes that these boys were assumed to be from the Gülen movement]. How do we know that they are [cemaat boys]? You know, you chat with them a little, then you find out that they went to imam hatip [religious vocational] high schools, that they are religious boys. They are the boys of this new period. They grew up in Işık evleri⁶⁷. They were put in a rotating education program and most were then hired. During this government, to create their own cadres in the media they brought in lots of such people with cemaat [Gülen movement] background or other religious background. They were handed to us. We were told “teach them the job.” They didn’t tell us something like, we’ll fire you and replace you with these guys. But over the process, us, the oldies left and they [cemaat boys] came to dominate the organization.

⁶⁷ *Işık evleri* means houses of light. These were student residences established by the Gülen movement to teach Islam. At these houses there was a rigid daily routine of work, prayer and sleep and students’ activities were overseen by supervisors.

These journalists highlighted the increasing nepotism inside the newspapers and their feeling of status loss resulting from the decline in merit-based hiring. One journalist, for instance, describes her feelings towards the transformation within the newspaper *Sabah* as “the bottom point of decay”:

There are such people among the new managers in the proponent media, who cannot manage me. They cannot teach me a word. This may sound arrogant but I really know much more [about this profession] than they do. What can they teach me. I worked in this profession for much longer. I paid my dues. Take one example. One of them was an intern to us working at the weekend supplements of the newspaper. He started the profession a few years ago. We taught him how to make news, and he is now a manager. Why? Because he is a friend of the prime ministers' son. That's the only reason. This is how the new media works in Turkey. People who are childhood friends [to the prime minister's son] can now become managers. What else should I say. This is the bottom-point of decay.

These journalists explain that the process of transformation made them feel that their identity is excluded:

They never tell you that they dismiss you because you are critical. They say we are making the cadres younger if the journalist [that is dismissed] is old. Or lets say one works in the health news services. They say “we are no longer going to make news about health.” That's how it works. So, I would say people are not necessarily dismissed but they are eliminated. And at each time of such transformation new people come to the newspaper. At Sabah the ones that came

were certainly more religious. Slowly the newspaper employees grew more religious.

Journalists who were sacked after the 2013 Gezi Protests also note that they very well know that they were not dismissed because of their journalistic conduct but because of their support for the Gezi. However, they add that this was never directly stated:

For instance during Gezi, I hanged a Gezi forum on the walls within the building. We made pictures, we put those pictures online, we went to Gezi, we collected money for Gezi. None of these were a problem. They seemed that they did not care about these. But when the attitude of the government towards Gezi changed so did the attitude of the newspaper. No one said anything to us. But one day the manager of our department, who had joined the department in the last few years and is a much younger person than I am, asked if I hung that thing on the wall. He read them all etc. Then he asked, do you support Gezi? I said I go there everyday and I support Gezi protesters and I oppose the policies of the government and the police's attitude against Gezi protesters. He said good, and left. I was dismissed two months after this. I asked why I was being dismissed. They said that there was no particular reason. It was not about journalism. Lots of people like me were sacked at that time for supporting Gezi⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ When the journalist notes that he was dismissed he adds that dismissals are often cases of resignation: "Here is what happened to me. They did not dismiss me. If they were to dismiss me I could sue them and the process would get longer and longer. But they told me that they want to dismiss me. When they told me this they also presented a condition: you resign and I will give you all your rights [severance payment etc.]. If you refuse they don't give anything. So journalists usually avoid this long process and resign."

Journalists who feel their identity and their understanding of journalism was excluded from their newspaper describe the kind of pressure that they feel as a form of “covert mobbing.” Their description of the pressure very much resembles the description of the pressure presented by journalists who work in the mainstream media:

As the time of working [together with the newly appointed managers] increases, you realize that the kinds of news you make are included less while proponent news are included more, or [you realize that] the kinds of subjects I want to be included in the newspaper make up very little part of the newspaper. This creates an invisible mobbing effect on the journalist. This means that nobody tells you to leave, you continue to do your work, but the kind of work you do is not made part of the newspaper. Or let's say you are 5 reporters. 2 of them are selected not to be send out to news making while 3 others are supported. After a while these journalists [who feel excluded] resign.

Another journalist working at the TGS confirms the description of the pressure as he underlines isolation as a method of pressure at these newspapers:

During the Gezi Protests we documented that critical journalists at newspapers such as Sabah were isolated. No one would talk to them. Imagine, employees not talking to one another! This is what is meant by government pressure! In one particular case, the director at the journalist's department yelled at him noting that he cannot criticize the government there and others heard of this. Then these other journalists began not talking to him.

Overall, in a similar vein to the journalists working at mainstream organizations, these journalists underline the loss of status they experienced within the newspaper when media outlets changed hands.

Independent Media: Status Unchanged

Journalists addressed in this section work outside the mainstream media and the proponent media in smaller independent newspapers. Specifically, the journalists whose narratives I use as evidence in this section have worked for *Dicle Haber Ajansı (DIHA)*, *Özgür Gündem*, *Evrensel*, *IMC TV*, *Bianet*, *T24*, and *Hayat TV*. These journalists usually define themselves as critics, leftists, socialists and supporters of the Kurdish political movement. Many of these journalists note that because of their staunch criticism of political authority, mainstream media never wanted to employ them. A journalist in this group, who also worked as a press consultant in the 1990s for the center-left Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP), presents his story:

I always identified as a Marxist and I worked at such institutions. I worked at ANKA news agency in the 1980s but everyone at that news agency was also leftist like me. It was really nice. Later I worked at similar institutions. There was no place for me or for people like me in the mainstream. I didn't want it, either. I worked at places that I identified with. After all everybody knows you. You're like a "stamped donkey" (damgalı eşek in Turkish). No one would give you a job at stations other than those that think like you.

Among the journalists working at independent outlets, there are also those who have worked for years at mainstream newsoutlets and then moved to smaller outlets. They usually call themselves democrats and state that their goal is unbiased journalism.

Both groups of journalists usually compare contemporary pressures to two major periods of state repression, namely the 1980 coup d'état and the armed conflict between the PKK and the Armed Forces during the 1990s. For instance, one journalist who identifies as a socialist relates his experience of journalism during the 1990s while comparing contemporary pressures to those days:

In the 1990s there was big pressure. Now it's relatively less threatening. Back then there was heavy pressure on the newspaper. Journalists would get killed. Reporters would get killed. I got in trouble at the time of Özgür Gündem's bombing. My wife used to work at the prime ministry's press office. When Özgür Gündem was bombed, the newspaper published a document that said the bombing was ordered by Çiller [the prime minister of the time]. Çiller's signature was underneath. This document was given to Özgür Gündem. People thought my wife had given that document to me because I was working at Özgür Gündem at the time. But it's not a document that would go to my wife. They forced her to resign. They sued her. If she had given it, I would have said it now, it's been years, but that's not the case. What actually happened is that someone from the prime ministry gave it to ANKA. The director of ANKA at the time feared publishing it and the document was then given to Özgür Gündem. But we bore the brunt of it. My wife was exiled, they tried to dismiss her, then she retired etc. Our family suffered the consequences.

In general, these journalists share the opinion that the acts of the government in the last decade signaled a war waged against the opposition -- the seculars, the leftists, and the Kurds. In these accounts, the KCK trials in particular constitute a means of creating inequality among journalists with varying political identities. In this context, a journalist who was tried with the KCK emphasizes the dual standards of the courts in prosecuting critical and mainstream media journalists:

In the trial, all the things that they accused me of were my news. These are news published in Radikal, in Doğan News Agency [mainstream media outlets], too. There were reporters from those outlets standing next to me when I was making the news. You can see that in the photos [that were used as an evidence in the trial against this journalist]. But he [the police] circles me in the photograph and presents it as an evidence of crime. Well, the guy next to me is also a reporter! If there is a crime there, why isn't he on trial. We keep joking about this nowadays: "Now you say so, but you'll see this in a few days in your indictment." This has become part of our everyday conversations.

Nevertheless, the dominant narrative among these journalists is that their status vis-à-vis the political authority has not changed much. Even when they acknowledge that the definition of enemy has changed over the 2000s, they say that they were treated as an enemy of the state in the past and that they are treated as such today. An example is presented by a journalist who identifies as a socialist and critical journalist:

In that period [over the 1990s], with a spiteful understanding, they launched operations to kill the people which they categorized as terrorist and which they thought deserved to die. We would follow the news, find witnesses, trace the

killings. ... When we tried to write about these we would encounter pressure from the state. Most of the pressure that I personally encountered at the time was from the police. I was attacked so many times. They beat me, they detained me, they threatened to kill me. All of this is about my practice of journalism. They would call me a terrorist back then. I was labeled as a leftist terrorist. The party in rule was different. The regime was different. In the 2000s the regime has changed, the owners of the regime have changed, the owners of the police force have changed, but the terms of being defined as a terrorist remained unchanged. So long as you continue to make news where you express what a bad thing the government is, you continue to be labeled as a terrorist. We were doing rights-based journalism back then. We still do rights-based journalism. In the kinds of journalism we do, we are aware of the pressures we may encounter. This is a fight for democracy. If you want to do this, then you take the risk of these [pressures]. If you don't take the risk it's not worth doing this job.

Similarly, journalists who work for the Kurdish press note that the Kurdish press has always been considered as non-existent, and continues to be treated as such by the state as well as other journalists:

Kurdish press is always considered as non-existent. So are the people working there. Our friend goes to a news and he gets beaten by the police. No other outlet publicizes it. But if the journalist or reporter of a mainstream newspaper, such as Radikal, is hurt then we talk about this for days. We are always treated as if we do not exist. This is our main problem. Other than that we do not really pressure one another. For instance, last year we had a protest event that lasted for a

month. It was the “Witnesses for Journalists in Jail” Days. The families and friends of the journalists in prison came and said, “we are witnesses that they are journalists”. For instance, on one particular day we were there for Mustafa Balbay, Vedat Kurşun and another journalist from the journal Yürüyüş. The next day the mainstream media reported only on the support for Mustafa Balbay. They consider Vedat Kurşun as a terrorist. You ask them why they only report about Balbay. They say they write but their editor does not include it in the news. I think it’s just an excuse. They hit the brake themselves. They don’t write about it. They know that it will not be published and they don’t write about it.

The same journalist further notes that the mainstream media often does not want to appear with them. He gives the example of how journalists from the mainstream media move their own microphones away from Kurdish journalists’ microphones so that the name tags do not appear side by side:

When you put the microphone of your organization next to the microphone of a mainstream media outlet such as CNNTurk, their reporter turns your microphone so that the name of your institution cannot be read. They don’t want your name to appear on their screen.

Similarly, another journalist describes being treated as criminals by the police:

We now know it quite well that when we go somewhere to make news the police first arrests us. Or they make fun of us as “Hey, Free Press!” And if you respond, you are taken under custody. That’s how it works.

Another journalist underlines the same problem as she highlights how they easily become the target of police violence in the field:

We go out for news, the police knows who we are, that we are from the critical press. For instance, a police commissioner makes a public statement at a protest event and right across him Sabahat Tuncel, Ertuğrul Kürkçü, Sırrı Süreyya Önder [all of these three people are HDP MPs] are making a statement. We go to the MPs to shoot their statements. Since the police knows, who we are and that we are making a news of HDP, the police targets us, breaking our cameras etc. We encounter such things all the time.

Even when these journalists criticize their own news outlets, they still point to the state as the major threat to the press. An example is presented by a journalist, who identifies as a leftist and criticizes the Kurdish news outlet, where he worked, for being too Kurdish-political-movement oriented. In his criticism of the outlet, the journalist still primarily emphasizes the threats directed at the institution by the state:

They [the founders of the news outlet] said they were establishing a news outlet. I wanted to be part of it and I went. But it did not turn out to be the kind of institution that I expected. In my view, it was more like a war bulletin than a newspaper. You write in your news “this is happening in the southeast” then they publish it as “this is happening in Kurdistan” with my signature underneath. That’s not what I have written. The newspaper was close to PKK and I am from the tradition of TIP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, Workers Party of Turkey). I have a certain world view and the editorial policy of the newspaper did not fit with my views. It nevertheless was a good newspaper. Many of its reporters were killed. I worked there and I really enjoyed it but I didn’t like its style of journalism. So I left after 5-6 months. I respect them. You may get killed but you get killed for

something that you set your heart on. That movement simply was not my movement. It could only be a movement that I could sympathize with but not my own movement. It is in fact like that. I sympathize with publications that defend the rights of the Kurds but I cannot be part of a militant newspaper that is not of my own party. That's why I left.

Conclusion

In the conclusion section of the second chapter, I mentioned that the developments over the 1990s had shaped the conditions of work for journalists as much as their political identities. Those who had experienced the February 28 Process had distanced themselves from secularist state institutions as well as the mainstream media outlets that had supported military action, those who had experienced the armed conflict between the PKK and the Armed Forces had distanced themselves from the military as well as the media outlets that had sided with the military in the conflict. This chapter has shown that journalists often referred to these past periods of repression to understand their contemporary status positions vis-à-vis the political authority. On the one hand, these periods of repression became anchors of their collective political identities. On the other, they became anchors for comparisons of conduct in contemporary journalism.

Overall, the chapter shows that journalists with varying political identities were variously affected by the destabilization of power hierarchies. The religious-conservative and liberal journalists experienced the developments between 2002 and 2013 as status gain vis-à-vis the secularist military-bureaucratic state establishment and the social groups that they think were supportive of the military-bureaucratic state establishment. The journalists in the

mainstream media who identify either as leftists, seculars or apoliticals, as well as the journalists in the proponent media, who do not support the political authority, experienced the destabilization as a status loss. Finally, for journalists who identified as leftists, socialists or supporters of the Kurdish political movement and worked at independent news outlets, the destabilization of the hierarchies did not amount to status loss or status gain but to a continuity in status position in that they thought they were always considered as an enemy of the state. While journalists with varying political identities had varying experiences of the destabilization of power hierarchies, these experiences were not independent of one another but relational. One's status gain was generated at the expense of the others' status loss.

Journalists' understandings of their status position clearly affected the emotional atmosphere prevailing in their professional settings. In the following chapter, I present journalists' emotional interpretations of the destabilization and how these emotional interpretations overlap with the shifts in their status positions.

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DESTABILIZATION: STATUS SHIFTS AND EMOTIONS

Everything that I write contains the thoughts and feelings that I have at the moment of writing ... I write with the consciousness of my perceptions at that particular moment of time. When you look [at my writings] back from the future you may say “it was such a period.” ... In the future, those who will check the pieces in the archives will collect evidence on the structure and spirit of the environment where these pieces were written. Among my pieces, there are dozens that already lost their validity. Yet they all tell how my emotions influence my writings.

(Özvarış 2016)

This brief quote from an interview with a journalist summarizes the goal of this chapter. The shifts in journalists’ status positions vis-à-vis the political authority have affected the atmosphere prevailing in their professional relations. In this chapter, I am

looking for a narrative of this atmosphere that dominated their professional relationships before delving in the next chapter into a discussion of how this atmosphere affected their professional practices.

The chapter relies on the in-depth interviews that I conducted with journalists. In addition to my own interviews, I also use interviews that were conducted with journalists by other journalists. Analyzing the interviews, I found that journalists present the atmosphere prevailing in their professional relationships in emotion narratives. In these emotion narratives, they reflect on how they feel and how they think the majority of others are feeling. In other words, they elaborate on their collective feelings towards the destabilization that they endure in their professional relationships. Collective feelings generated through social interaction in a particular milieu, in this case the field of journalism, are called “emotional climates” (Rivera and Paez 2007).

The chapter shows that the dominant emotional climates in the field between 2002 and 2013 varied with shifts in journalists’ status positions vis-à-vis the political authority. Like the previous chapter, this chapter is organized into three subsections along with three groups of media outlets that existed between 2002-2013: 1) mainstream media outlets, 2) proponent media outlets, 3) independent media outlets. Journalists working at these three groups of media outlets had varying experiences with state repression in the past. They therefore have varying emotional interpretations of the destabilization in power hierarchies, and each of these groups of media outlets are therefore dominated by different emotional climates (see Table 5).

Table 5. Status Shifts & Emotional Climates

Group	Status Shift	Emotional Climate
Mainstream Media	Status loss	Fear, Hopelessness
Proponent Media	Status gain	Admiration (for the prime minister), Likemindedness (with the political authority)
Independent Media	Status unchanged	Fear, Respect (for the profession)

Status Loss: Fear & Hopelessness

Journalists addressed in this section work in mainstream media outlets which practice news-making under the threat of being punished by the ruling party for their critical practices. The journalists whose narratives I use as evidence have worked for *CNNTürk*, *Hürriyet*, *NTV*, *Habertürk*, and *Radikal*. Interpreting the developments in the field as a war waged against the “enemies” of the ruling party and the consequences of this war as status loss and disempowerment, journalists working in the mainstream media describe the emotional climate in their professional relationships as one of “psychological pressure” where “the pressure is in the air.” They usually refer to narratives of fear and hopelessness to exhibit this emotional climate in detail.

Fear

Fear is the major emotion narrative defining journalists’ accounts. It encompasses the narratives of journalists who work in the mainstream media in three major ways: fear associated with political trials, fear associated with being dismissed from their workplaces, and fear associated with individual attacks on journalists.

Political Trials: Fear of being stigmatized, arrested and wiretapped

Journalists noted that these trials were evidence of how power has changed hands in Turkey – the redefined the object of fear in the country. While most of these accounts pointed to the “government” as responsible for spreading fear via political trials, others drew a distinction between the ruling party and the Gülen movement. For instance, one journalist noted that the arrest of the Chief of General Staff on terrorist charges in the Ergenekon trial demonstrate not that the General Staff is no longer untouchable but that the Gülen movement has the power to imprison whoever it likes, regardless of the law, due process or the absurdity of the allegations; and it further proved that in today's Turkey it is not the military but the Gülen Movement that people need to fear (Jenkins 2012).

Journalists further noted that they viewed the political trials that were waged against political opposition after 2008 as an indication of how the government may act in the future towards its opponents:

In this country, [over the process of the trials] we have seen that you do not really have to do anything wrong, we have seen how they make up evidence, how they imprisoned people based on fabricated evidence. That's how we have come to fear.

Journalists also noted that they feared of more trials to come:

An empire of fear has been created. According to a rumor, there will be a big investigation about the Gezi protests starting with 2014 and that journalists, academics, all will be arrested. Apparently, this investigation will even be bigger than the Ergenekon investigations. These are the things that we talk about or read about on a daily basis. Yesterday, I read a columnist. He writes, “I have a soccer game on Monday; on Wednesday and Thursday I have work to do. I am free on

Fridays, if you're taking me under custody, take me on Friday." These are the kinds of talks we have now.

Political trials also spread the fear of being stigmatized, and especially of being described as a supporter of coup d'états or of terrorism. Journalists noted that because of the stigmatization they did not know how to act or how to express their views:

The moment you criticize the government you become a supporter of coup d'état. They describe their moral coherence in reference to being in opposition to coups. Everything got mixed up. The moment you make news on being against those who said "Not enough but yes" [referring to the liberals who voted yes together with the AKP supporters during the 2010 Referandum] you come to be labeled as a coup supporter. What does that mean, that means you support death penalty etc. It is really awkward. You come from the political tradition that has suffered most from the coups in this country and then you become a supporter of a coup d'état.

Soner Yalçın, who was a journalist at *Hürriyet* and was fired shortly after he was detained in the Ergenekon trial, explained in an interview the kind of stigmatization that was at work during the trial process:

For a year and a half, we witnessed the biggest discredit campaign that was undertaken in Turkey. Especially about me. It was undeniably a smear campaign. On top of that this was done in an unscrupulous manner. They acted as enemies on purpose. They lied, they distorted. Some discussed press freedom through Soner Yalçın. You cannot discuss an issue through a single person. Young and inexperienced ones said that the problem was [my] "tone". They did not know what they were saying. They were discussing my language, my tone. Could my

tone and my language be a matter of a terror trial? They said: “Well, he had written this!” We were talking about terror, I was tried at a Special Penal Court, I was in jail. We may discuss my tone in the media, we may talk about this, but this is not a matter to be discussed at a court. This is what hurt me most. We have a press history of 170 years, where did these people come from? How did they establish such a big choir? They made my entire life a door mat on TV. (Tatari 2013)

Similarly, Bekir Coşkun notes that he and his wife were afraid of being included in the Ergenekon trial when they saw Coşkun’s name being discussed on TV in a discussion program in the context of Ergenekon. In the program, one of the commentators, who supported the trial process, was noting that Coşkun had supported the 2007 military memorandum and that had meant support for violence (Coşkun 2011, 145).

Trials also triggered fear of being wiretapped. One journalist explained the relationship between the political trials, wiretappings and the prevailing fear in the profession in the following way:

Well I definitely talk less on the phone. I think that my talks may be framed in a different way and used as an evidence. This is the case because of the recent trials. They affected us all. There is such a fear in the entire society and this is quite normal. No one can categorize this as a paranoia. It’s not a paranoia. In Turkey, journalists and also members of some other professions are being wiretapped. The likelihood is very high. If you remember, the previous minister for transportation and communication, Binali Yıldırım, had said: “If you don’t have something to hide why are you afraid of being wiretapped?” Well, we also

witnessed their [the ruling party politicians'] reactions when the records of their own talks were leaked! ... Anyway, we all have the possibility of being wiretapped in mind. When I talk to my friends I advise them not to tell me their secrets on the phone, or that they should not be too open on the phone. I don't have anything to hide but they may try to disgrace us with our private lives. They did this. They did this during the Ergenekon trial. For example, they said that Ilhan Selçuk [a well-respected journalist] was watching Fashion Tv [implying that he watches models]. In the trial files, they included ridiculous details about so many people. The goal was defamation.

Similarly, columnists who are outspoken critiques of the government noted that the wiretappings created fear of being trapped:

During the military times, they came and took you to the jail. Or they killed you. Now they play with your dignity. They wiretap you, they listen to your talks at home, they watch the moves of your wife, they collect information about your daughter etc. For instance a journalist like Uğur Dündar almost cried on TV while reading the news because of a story about his wife. Or nine military officers killed themselves [in the trial process]. These are all because of the methods that are used to pressure people. What we see today as the dirty methods of the political authority is only the top of the iceberg. ... With the wiretappings they ruined my life, too. For people like me who constantly criticize the government, who are critical of the government... These made my life insufferable. The fear of being bombed or killed is now replaced with the fear of being trapped. You feel

like you're being watched all the time. You know your talks are being wiretapped.

You start warning your wife, your daughter. Then they say, he is going mad.

Journalists also underlined that the fear of being stigmatized, wiretapped or arrested creates a state of uncertainty that adds on to the existing emotion of fear:

I definitely think I am being wiretapped and this affects my life. I may not be an important person for them with my private activities. But because of my professional activities I could be an important one. I think we all could be wiretapped as journalists. Given the circumstances in this country, we have started thinking of this as quite normal. You may ask why I think that I am being wiretapped. Well sometimes I talk to my colleagues in Ankara and we try to construct the news on the phone. Then we hear some sounds [on the phone]. That's what makes me suspect. People who write about politics and try to remain objective are the most threatening ones for them. Clearly, it's not possible to do this [job] without fear. You fear. Plus, there constantly is an uncertainty about what will happen three days later. What could these men do. What would they do to our news institution. They may come here and ask why are you reporting internationally, they may say "it is because of you that Turkey looks bad abroad", we may be treated as traitors. I would not want to be stigmatized as a traitor and hurt by a psychopath.

Property Transfers: Fear within the Newsoutlets

Seizure or financial punishment of media outlets was another source of fear among journalists who worked in the secular mainstream media. One of my interviewees in close circles with Ertuğrul Özkök, who was the chief editor of the daily *Hürriyet* for twenty years

and resigned from his post after the tax fine imposed on Doğan Media Group, noted that the atmosphere in which Özkök left his position was one of fear. In his account, the ruling party “had frightened the owners of the newspapers” and was forcing them to retreat:

These men have frightened the owners of newspapers, they frightened the newspaper editors. You may say that there are newspapers like Sözcü that still continue oppositional journalism - Emin Çölaşan, Uğur Dündar continue to work. But, they put people in jail. Who's going to run away. How? This could have been the case during the cold war but under current circumstances it's not possible. There are those who stayed in jail for 4 years. Balbay [one of the journalists jailed in the Ergenekon trial] stayed inside for 4 years ... İlhan [another journalist jailed in the Ergenekon trial] was a good friend of mine. İlhan Selçuk. Since 1952 Thank God he did not live long enough [İlhan Selçuk was taken under custody in 2008 and died two years later at the age of eighty five while the trial still continued]. If he were alive they could have persecuted him ... The man [Tayyip Erdoğan] says you'll silence this editor-in-chief. He made a person, who he thinks is close to himself, the editor-in-chief. This is also bad for that boy, Enis Berberoğlu. As far as I know him, he's not that kind of a person. But with Ertuğrul [Özkök], they clearly forced him to leave. In our conversation, I told Ertuğrul this is good for you. He said, why good, I could have served for another five years. I told him that he did good enough.

Similarly, when asked whether he would get calls from the politicians on how he should regulate the newspaper, the chief editor of *Radikal* between 2010 and 2016 highlighted the atmosphere of fear created by the tax fine:

Doğan Group paid a tax fine over one million. We do not live in a world of dreams, right! The group that I work at has experienced a threat and paid the price. It would be a lie to say that this does not affect our lives at all. (Özvarış 2014d).

The fear felt by the managers and the chief editors diffused throughout the news organizations and shaped ordinary journalists' emotional climates, as well. One journalist explains that changes in the managerial level are interpreted in the context of political developments and that with each change in the managerial level the atmosphere has become more oppressive:

At our institution there was Cem Aydın [as the channel manager]. He handed the position over to Kemal Can. Then Kemal Can handed it over to Mirgün Cabas, Mirgün Cabas handed it over to Mustafa Hoş and then it all got messed up. Cem Aydın was the one who reflected the pressures to us the least. Kemal Can was like a buffer zone. The pressure to Mirgün increased and he tried to find a middle ground. I remember his fights with Banu Güven [the anchor woman at the channel at the time] on what can be turned into news and what not. With the coming of Mustafa Hoş it was all over. He arrived in the summer of 2009. I left in the autumn of 2009. Then Banu Güven left in 2010. Then we discussed why we did not leave together. We thought we should have left together when Mirgün was replaced with Mustafa Hoş. Then he also had to leave. You know, it was because of the Gülen Movement. He criticized the Gülenists and he had to leave. ... Anyway, when the managers are changed then you interpret this change in the context of political developments. The topics that you turn into news change.

Everything changes. Cem Aydın had told us: “I am tired of quarrelling with those above me. Please sympathize with me.” As managers were changed the news content became more tabloid. ... Even that was not sufficient. Then our Ankara representative, who was close to Bülent Arınç [the Deputy Prime Minister], became the chief editor. At that point our institution had long since surrendered.

In this atmosphere, journalists primarily feared being perceived by their managers as threatening to their news organizations because of their political views. This was a time when journalists were fired after being detained in the political trials. For instance, Soner Yalçın, who was a journalist at *Hürriyet*, was fired shortly after he was detained in the Ergenekon trial. In the presence of performances like these, the fear of being fired on political grounds was not unfounded.

In this context, journalists feared being dismissed from their posts for conflicting the interests of the government in their news. One journalist noted that their boss had explicitly told them: “As you wish!” implying that they would either comply with what is expected of them or leave. In addition to producing politically critical news, talking of the “phone calls” publicly was also a source of fear for journalists. One of my interviewees, in his early 30s in a relatively junior position, noted that he would lose his job if anyone knew he was saying the following to me:

In 2011, when the records of Oslo Talks [a series of meetings that took place in the Norwegian capital between 2009 and 2011 between Turkish intelligence's contact with senior PKK figures] were leaked to settle the decades-long armed conflict, when there was the Sincan attack [after the PKK killed 24 soldiers, buildings of the BDP across the country were attacked and Sincan was one area

where a BDP building was attacked], the “Kurdish-Turkish peace process” was brought to an end and the isolation of Öcalan was restarted, in that period we received definite orders that we were not going to publish any news about the BDP politicians, certainly none at the headlines or in somewhere clearly visible to the reader. This sentence was formed!

Journalists mentioned that the state of the job market augmented their fear of unemployment. They noted that they would not be able to find another job in the mainstream media if they were fired on political grounds. For many, losing one's job in the mainstream media meant losing one's salary:

My first experience with censorship had happened during the war [referring to the armed conflict between the Turkish Armed Forces and the PKK] in the 1990s at Radikal. But back then being dismissed on political grounds did not cause not being able to work at another media outlet. In contrast, when I was dismissed, my managers had been references for me so that I could find a new job. And I was able to find a job at another prestigious newspaper. Today journalists do not have that opportunity. People are so polarized. Back then, journalists would be dismissed, they would even get killed but everyone still had a common sense of what newsmaking entailed. You could still do news when you insisted on doing it. You could find a job at another institution when you were fired on political grounds. The psychological pressure was not as high as today.

Baydar (2015) similarly notes that many of those who are fired on political grounds are labeled as “toxic” and not recruited elsewhere.

Here I should note that in addition to the professional risks explained here, journalists also stated that their non-professional activities carried the potential of being perceived as a threat to the organization. Some noted that their news organizations tracked their twitter activities to protect the outlet from attacks by the government. Accordingly, criticizing the government on their personal twitter could lead to dismissals:

They [members of the ruling party] call to say “this guy is on your channel all the time but he also keeps tweeting this and that [implying that he tweets against the party]”. It is said that our outlet has made a deal with a firm that tracks all employees’ tweets. Even if you tweet with a nickname! For instance my wife is a journalist at Al Jazeera. About 30 people were sacked there. Now they are making them sign agreements where they say they will not tweet on politics. But if we praise the foreign policy of Davutoğlu [foreign minister of the time] or write a book to praise the party’s policies that’s not a problem!

Overall, for journalists who worked in the mainstream media outlets, challenging the interests of the government meant challenging the interests of the owners. In this context, journalists feared being identified by the managers as a threat to the organization for criticizing the government and being dismissed on these grounds.

Fear of Individual Attacks

Many journalists pointed at the prime minister as the major source of fear. The chief editor of *Habertürk*, for instance, notes:

There is only one red line for the government, namely Tayyip Erdoğan. Anything that does not interest him is free. Yet given that he is consulted in everything, everything is banned. (Özvarış 2015c)

Another journalist similarly describes the prime minister as “Turkey’s chief press critic.” It is primarily because of the prime minister’s public scolding of individual journalists and media organizations that he is cited as a major source of fear among journalists. For instance, one journalist who was publicly scolded by the prime minister, for instance that he is afraid because he is one of the first people to come to mind when the name of his institution is mentioned:

Well after the public scolding I was not directly threatened. But the government has indirect threats. They constantly say, “we know why they are doing this, the press is doing this, their tools in this country are doing that.” When they talk of our institution, we feel under threat, and I am the first person that comes to mind when the name of our institution is mentioned. So even when they do not directly talk of me, the moment they target our institution I feel I am a target as well.

Another journalist who engaged in a public quarrel with the prime minister similarly notes that he felt physically threatened after his conflict with the prime minister:

There were armed people around my house. My wife is a Catholic and someone brought her a Koran, throwing it at her face. The police did not come to protect our residence. The youth in the neighborhood watched our house to protect us. Things like that happened a lot at that time.

He further explains that even though he considered suing the prime minister at the time, the newspaper that he was writing for was afraid of a direct enmity with him.

Hopelessness

Another emotion narrative through which journalists described the prevailing emotional climate is hopelessness. Journalists commonly attribute their problems in their

professional relations to the “system”. Accordingly the media is a “no-way out system”, where journalists lack the power to bring about change:

My boss is a real journalist and he is the one who helped me in getting my news accepted. So he never did it personally. I should say that. He was very sad indeed. In the office. I would curse all the time. We would discuss together that journalism shouldn't be conducted like this. [It is] Because we all experienced this the entire time. With every incident, we would say, come on, this can't be real. So there is no such thing as not being able to talk at the office or to your boss. You can discuss but that doesn't change anything. It's all about the system.

In this description, journalists define their role as “just a cog in the system”. They note that nothing would change in the system if they were to react for instance by resigning. They note that they would simply be replaced by another person who would do the exact same thing as they do:

We can't do anything against this system. You obviously have to make your living and go on living. I have a child. But then it's not an excuse to say you have a child. So many people pay such a big price. But then I also think, what is going to change when I leave. I mean they are going to hire another person and he is going to do the same job. We all work in this system. We do not agree with the government but we all submit to it. None of us reacts to it. They created an empire of fear. We now joke about getting arrested, or getting fired.

Another one of my interviewees similarly notes:

I thought about quitting my job at least 3-4 times in the last 5 years. I was not alone in this at our workplace. I did it at the end, but others couldn't. They still

continue to work there. Why? ... They pay rent, they have the economic responsibility of someone other than themselves -- a mother, a child, a wife --, some pay for health problems. ... They all have a reason that ties them to this workplace. And obviously the severance pay. They all want to get their severance payments. They all think about resigning but then they cannot. After a certain amount of time you normalize this. You no longer think about quitting. Knowing that you won't quit, you stop reacting.

Dağıstanlı (2014, p. 33) calls this hopelessness an “even if I refuse to do this, somebody will do it anyway” mentality. In his account, this is a means of depersonalizing responsibility. My interviews support this argument in that journalists primarily think that the system can be changed only from above and not from below. However, I should note that journalists are also hopeless when it comes to other actors who they think could have the power to transform the system. For instance, a journalist, who notes that there is no hope for breaking the political pressure, also underlines owners’ and chief editors’ lack of power:

In an atmosphere where these guys replaced the military tutelage with their own tutelage regime, one cannot expect the media to be free or to own its ideals ...

Well at the time of the military order there was severe censorship, newspaper owners, the editors-in-chief would be under severe pressure, but they would look for any small opportunity that would break the censorship. And such opportunities would arise. Now there is no such hope and there is no such effort. No one thinks that they can break this pressure.

Journalists also note that there is no hope for changing the attitudes of the media owners. A columnist in close circles with media owners notes that he often asks the owners

the question: “what about journalism?” The owners respond by laughing sarcastically, implying that journalism is not their priority at the moment. Another journalist, similarly notes:

Over the 2000s, journalism was relatively independent even in the mainstream media. Owners had more autonomy. [It was] Independent at a level that is incomparable to the conditions today. Take the example of NTV. NTV would do such good news that we all admired its projects. The owner was the same person. Not much has changed in the ownership. But many have been dismissed. Why? This means that something must have changed in the owner’s relationship with the political authority. Maybe because he got the tender offers for the new subway. Or they might have caused a loss to him, or caused some sort of bankruptcy that he surrendered. We don’t have access to information on those relationships. But we know that journalism is no longer a priority to them.

Journalists also underline that there are no outlets for raising their concerns. When I asked about solidarity, means of struggle and in particular the organized means of struggle, answers again pointed at a hopeless emotional climate. In these accounts there is no organized force to back them even if they are to act in opposition. One journalist who is a member of TGC and ÇGC notes the following:

I am a member of both the TGC and ÇGD. I go to their meetings. But there is a serious problem in the functioning of these institutions. As journalists in Turkey we do not have organized power. TGC is not effective. The situation at the unions is worse. Even the unionized force at AA [Anadolu News Agency] has come to an end. There are a few smaller organizations but they are too small to

be effective. The political cleavages prevent journalists from getting together. Those who support the government are definitely not part of these organizations. In the existing organizations political positions are often more prioritized than the professional issues of journalists. Sometimes we get together in very extreme events, like when the number of incarcerated journalists reaches a level. But other than that there are no umbrella organizations that speak for our rights.

For the younger generation, unionization and membership in professional associations is often not even considered an option. Some refer to the stories of journalists from the 1990s who lost their jobs as a consequence of insisting on unionization, while others say that these organizations do not really appeal to them. When asked about why they would not become part of a professional organization or a union, many note that unionization was long over in the media. A journalist, for instance, notes that most problems addressed by journalists today are actually those that could easily be solved in the presence of strong unions. He then adds:

In Turkish mainstream media you cannot be unionized. All unionized journalists have been fired. And there is no more talk of being unionized. For example, here, if you become unionized you're fired. If you apply to a position as a unionized journalist, that means you are not going to get hired. So, I know this and I am not unionized. Actually unionization in the profession was over when I started working as a journalist.

Many of the younger journalists also consider becoming membership in a professional organization useless. Some note that they do not really identify with existing organizations:

I don't think they are effective means of support. ... I also don't see them as representing me. For example, I think of TGC as too old and too nationalist (ulusalci in Turkish). They are old and old-minded. In this profession, there are people from all sorts of political ideologies and they don't bother to try to represent everyone. One organization represents one political group, the other represents the other group. I do not see either of them as representative of my voice. They never try to establish a tie with us. They make a public claim after every incident. But that's it.

Older journalists often also underline the weakness of organized solidarity among journalists when they compare contemporary resistance to state pressure to the resistance of journalists during the 1980 coup d'etat:

My wife is also a journalist. During the military rule she was working at a newspaper in Ankara. She was taken under custody. At the time, the detained would be tortured at the station and made to accept the statements that allegedly belonged to them. After making them own the statement, the military would publicly display the detained in the media with guns etc. Journalists would shoot their pictures with guns etc. to label them as members of an organization. My wife was accused of being a member of the Turkish Workers Party. When they [the military] wanted to display her picture in the media and make pictures of her as a member of the organization, the journalists in Ankara protested. They said if you display her in the media as a member of an organization we are not going to shoot her pictures. Imagine such was the resistance during the military rule. And the military did not display her. Today there is no possibility for such resistance.

Journalists' hopelessness about transforming existing conditions also manifested itself also in their views on whether young graduates of journalism schools should become journalists. Many advise the young generation to not to do this job:

I tell the young journalists that they should not do this job. They should look for other means of making their living.

Such hopelessness is also observable in their views of the prospects for journalists in contemporary Turkey:

I think the best thing a journalist can do nowadays is not to work if s/he can make her living by other means.

According to all my interviewees, including a shareholder in a mainstream media outlet, the media owners have brought this atmosphere of hopelessness onto themselves by making journalism dependent on their interests in other sectors. In the words of a senior journalist, who used to be an editor-in-chief and a shareholder of a prominent mainstream newspaper:

Free press is gone. It's taken away. I am talking about the last few years in particular. It [the press] is silenced ... Well, the press has brought it on itself. We worked with newspaper owners who were actual journalists. Later, Aydın Doğan did a good job. His daughters [who also own and manage media outlets] are successful, too. They are graduates of Columbia, LSE and from communication schools. They all know their business and they carried it to a good point from the point of business. Yet, ambition, the ambition to gain a lot, made them hit the wall. You'll do energy business and use your identity as a

journalist; you use your newspaper to commercialize your business, to announce tender. No one buys that!

Status Gain: Admiration & Shared Wisdom

In this section, I address the journalists who work at proponent media outlets. The journalists whose narratives I use as evidence have worked for the news outlets *Sabah*, *YeniŞafak*, *Star*, *Zaman*, *YeniAkit* and *Kanal 7*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, journalists who worked at proponent outlets between 2002 and 2013 and set the emotional climate in these outlets can be grouped into three categories, namely religious-conservative journalists, liberal journalists and long-standing journalists.

The feelings in which these groups endured their jobs varied with their experiences in terms of status shift. I should also note that given the positions of these journalists within the organizational hierarchy, long-standing journalists' role in setting the emotional climate of proponent outlets was minor in comparison to religious-conservative and liberal journalists.

Admiration, Likemindedness and Fear

The experience of status gain for conservative-religious journalists corresponded to an emotional climate of admiration for the prime minister, likemindedness with the prime minister and a tendency to conceal the pressure. Many journalists in this group expressed their love for the personality of the prime minister. For instance, one of the prime ministers' press advisors, who later worked at *Sabah*, explains how he became a press advisor for the prime minister in a narrative of love:

I was a columnist at the daily Güneş. Mr. Tayyip was the Istanbul Provincial Head [of the party]. It was at a dinner of Erbakan. I had thought [about Mr.

Tayyip] “what a handsome man, so young.” It was 1991. Before I became his press advisor I [only] had couple of conversations with him in haste. When he became the mayor [of Istanbul] he knew me from my columns. He had offered me to become a press advisor but Kanal 7 convinced me. They made me news director. I didn’t know him that well. He had solemnized my marriage as the mayor. We got to know one another while working. I really liked the prime minister. He is the epitome of loyalty. Whatever happens to him happens for that reason. ... He is very joyous at dinners. Especially at small scale dinners. I saw so many friends who had many prejudices about him and fell in love with him after having a conversation with him. He is a really sincere person. (Altan 2009)

When the proponent businessmen Ethem Sancak bought *Show TV*, he also framed this purchase through the narrative of love. He claimed to have bought the channel because the prime minister was an idol for him, because he loved the prime minister and because the government needed an investment in the media. He continues to explain:

*Once in 100 years, a great man is born in Turkey. The more I got to know Mr. Tayyip the more I came to believe that he is the one for this era. I came to see the signs for this, the more I came to comprehend his personality, his depth. I see him as a friend. ... Mr. Tayyip was painted into a corner. It was the time of the trial of the AKP’s dissolution, the Constitutional Court’s decision to annul the first round in presidential elections of 2007 etc. The media was univocal and tried to stifle him. With Hasan Doğan, we talked about what we could do for him. We said, let’s break the univocality in the press.... There was no need to consult with the prime minister. [The daily] *Star* was on sale at TMSF. We bought it for 8.5 million*

dollars ... We made the daily Star bigger. We realized that the newspaper was not sufficient. The newspaper had become disreputable. We established the TV channel 24. I entered this business completely for my ideals, for serving him better. ... I sold it when my mission was over. (Vatan 2013)

In these narratives the acts that are viewed by the journalists who work in the mainstream media as an attack on secular or critical journalists are described as acts of saving the prime minister and those that have been oppressed up to that point in history. These journalists also note that they share the same ways of thinking with the prime minister. One journalist from *Sabah* notes:

The practice of journalism here builds on managers who share the same opinion as the government and who think like the government. The relations between the owners and the government are different from the relations between the owners of the secular media outlets and the government. The owners here are much more dependent on the government. Their relations are much thicker when compared to the secular media.

An editor of the daily *Star* between 2010 and 2014 who worked at *Star* 2007 onwards confirms this when he notes that the editorial staff at proponent outlets and the government have the same worldviews and therefore similar feelings towards the developments in the political and journalistic field:

It is not Ethem Sancak [the owner] who makes the daily Star or it is not Aydın Doğan [the owner] who makes the daily Hürriyet or Erdoğan Demirören [the owner] who makes the daily Milliyet. It is not the owners who make the newspapers but the editorial office. It is the journalists, who look out for the

government's and the owners' agenda, and who make the daily Star. ... [At Star] there is no need for phone calls from politicians. In the government's media [proponent media] there are people who are very familiar with the reflexes of the prime minister. Star also knows what it should do. ... Star means Mustafa Karaalioğlu. At least it meant so until Yusuf Ziya Cömert became the editor in chief. He closely knows the government and he is the one who configured the genetic codes of Star. The editorial office also knows well what they should do and what would annoy the government. There is a shared wisdom – so to say. For example Habertürk [a mainstream media outlet] does not have this shared wisdom (Özvarış 2014a).

These journalists often acknowledge the problems associated with the existing field of journalism in Turkey. For instance, a journalist highlighted the difficulty of moving from one position to another in such a polarized media system:

I wish it was possible to leave one of the 40 rooms and enter another under the circumstances of the contemporary [media] market. Yet I don't think that contemporary press has 40 rooms. There are only our media vs. their media. Our media, in other words the "government-pool media" and their media that the government wants to marginalize and that the prime minister labels as "them". (Özvarış 2014a)

However, the cherished feeling of empowerment vis-a-vis the "old order", love for the prime minister or likemindedness with the prime minister often prevent these journalists from openly criticizing the government, the Gülen movement, the developments in the

journalism between 2002-2013 or the problems within the proponent media. Instead they prefer to conceal these problems by normalizing them as problems of the entire media.

For instance, a columnist from the proponent media noted in a public interview that he received harsh reactions after writing a column that criticized the Gülenist media for its journalistic practices in the reporting of the Ergenekon case. In his column, he had criticized the Gülenists for presenting Ergenekon convicts as monsters and noted that everyone is innocent until he or she is found guilty. He noted that the kind of newsmaking practiced by the Gülenists runs contrary to the concepts of justice and morality in Islam. Later, when he was asked in the interview about the reactions he received, he refrained from mentioning the name of the Gülen group out loud:

I was excommunicated after writing that column. It was those that I wrote that column about, those circles ... It [the pressure] is still coming... I don't want to talk too openly. I already mentioned that I am writing on a knife-edge. They say that they understand when the criticisms are expressed in a proper manner. They say they understand if criticism does not equal defamation. But this is all empty talk! I warned them in a proper way. I wrote a sentence and have had a run of bad things. (Özvarış 2012)

Similarly, even when this journalist says that he does not consent to the kind of relationship that exists between the owners of the proponent media and the government, he nevertheless notes that he continues to write at a proponent newspaper because these relationships are none of his business:

I think we are headed towards a very dangerous process. The media and especially the proponent media has a disgusting relationship with the

government. I don't accept this. You may ask "why do you continue to work there?" I am not writing on everyday politics, I write theoretical-opinion pieces.

(Özvarış 2012)

In addition, journalists in this group usually feel the need to mention the problems in the mainstream media when they talk of the problems in the proponent media:

News that is thought to harm the peace process [with the Kurds] cannot make to the daily Star. Two specialized sergeants were kidnapped, at which newspaper did you see the news about this? Or the PKK's control of roads in the southeast? It's the same at other newspapers. They don't let Hasan Cemal write in the mainstream media. Can anyone else write [about these]? (Özvarış 2014a)

This attitude of not criticizing one's own group in the presence of its "enemies" was also made clear in interviews with me. Perceiving me as an outsider of the religious-conservative community, they automatically refrained from criticizing things for what they are. Instead, even when they were critical about the proponent media, they either kept stressing that the mainstream media had similar problems or claimed disinterest on such issues.

Many of the junior journalists in their 30s who described themselves as religious-conservatives noted that, while they appreciated the empowerment of the religious community, they were discontented with the structural conditions in the profession. These accounts of the conditions of the profession did not differ much from the accounts of their colleagues who work in the mainstream media. Like the journalists working in the mainstream media, they attributed these problems to the "system" rather than to the political authority.

In this context, first of all, they complain about the wage gap between reporters and ordinary journalists, on the one hand, and the chief editors and the prominent columnists, on the other. They believe their earnings to be far below what they deserve. One journalist, for instance, notes that she started the profession in 2006 with 400 TL a month without any insurance and that her salary had increased to 1100 TL when she quit her job in 2011. Second, they criticize the proponent media for not reporting on matters that directly relate to the businesses of the owners of the outlets. Third, multiple journalists complain that promotion in the workplace is not merit-based:

They hired a guy after me. He did not know the job but he was appointed as my director. There was no such position. All of a sudden they invented a position and appointed him as my director. This position was invented to give him a salary. He started with a really good salary. ... Things are so strange. They give raises. But they give the raises disproportionately. If one gets 100, the other in the same position gets 500. It's so strange.

In a similar vein to the journalists working in the mainstream media, they also express hopelessness when they note that they would not advise the younger generation to work in the media:

If someone were to ask me today if he or she should join the media I would definitely say that one should not become a journalist if one does not know enough number of people in the higher echelons of journalism.

A number of veiled journalists, in particular, criticize proponent media outlets for treating them worthlessly. They emphasize the disappointment they experience for encountering such behavior at a conservative outlet. One journalist notes:

They tell us “do you think you can find a job at another outlet!” That’s how I faced the reality that this is the only job I can get. ... I deeply resent this. I resent the fact that this happens at Yeni Şafak. They say they defend the truth, they argue that their readers are doing a good [in the religious sense] when they buy Yeni Şafak. But then they do this in a religious circle. I feel estranged from religious people just because I have seen the treatment here.

However, despite these complaints about the structural conditions and the disappointment of feeling worthless at a conservative media outlet, I should note that in criticizing the proponent outlets all these journalists keep emphasizing that the mainstream media outlets are at least as bad as the conservative ones. Considering me as an outsider of the conservative circles, they feel the need to explain that they are not criticizing their outlets at the expense of praising the mainstream media outlets.

Liberal journalists, who shared the feeling of empowerment against the “old” order of the military with their conservative-religious colleagues for much of the period between 2002 and 2013, expressed that they endured their professional relationships in an emotional climate of empowerment. Like religious-conservative journalists, during the process in which they felt empowered they blamed the wrongdoings in the media on the existing system. An experienced journalist noted that he did not quit his job until he was dismissed because he was earning well and he did not want to leave his severance payment there. He noted that if he was earning less he could have thought about quitting earlier but that was not the case. Liberal journalists in general expressed that the system was established by the mainstream media and therefore problems associated with the system were wrongdoings of primarily the mainstream media owners and not of the government.

Here I should note that the feeling of empowerment against the military and the “old” order that the liberals experienced until the “ideological partnership” was broken, did not necessarily mean exemption from the fear of being wiretapped. Much like their counterparts in the mainstream media they thought they were being wiretapped. However, their conceptions of who wiretapped them were not as clear as in the minds of the journalists that worked at mainstream media outlets:

I thought they were wiretapping us at Sabah. We thought a lot about this. We thought we were being wiretapped by a number of different groups, each with different objectives. The nationalists (ulusalcılar), the police, the secret service, the [Gülen] cemaat etc. That's how we thought. On the phone everyone puts on an act. Well, we feared, too. This is no joke. They jail you. They may make things up about you. They may make up evidence, include you in a trial with wiretappings. For instance I may say on the phone, “did you bring the thing” then they may say at the court that “the thing” referred to a bomb. You know these things happen. It all depends on whether they think of you as an enemy. If they think of you as an enemy, then it all goes down to what records they have about you. I think they have records of us all at some place.

Similarly, another liberal journalist noted:

Well we joke if I also have tapes somewhere. But I am also worried that, you know, they may use my images consuming alcohol etc. Because I am not directly reporting on national politics I feel less threatened. If I were to directly write about the prime minister or the Gülen movement I would fear much more. But this does not mean that I do not fear at all. We are all affected.

Fear and Hopelessness

As the liberals began to split ways with the governing party after 2011 and especially after the 2013 Gezi Protests, they came to describe the emotional atmosphere prevailing in their professional relationships as one of fear. At that point their narratives began to resemble to the narratives of journalists working in the mainstream media. For instance, a journalist who worked as an editor at *Sabah* from 2006 to 2014 notes that the management style in the newspapers slowly turned from an ideological partnership between the religious-conservatives and the liberals to a chain of command system steered by the religious-conservatives:

Well, Sabah and Star were bought by the proponents to establish a pro government media. When they bought these newspapers they appointed liberal editors to manage the newspaper. In a sense, they tried to control the newspapers with outsiders. Maybe they could not find a chief editor of their own, maybe they lacked a person with such skills, or maybe they tried to create some legitimacy in the eyes of the non-conservative readers through these figures. At that time it was not yet a chain of command system but rather an ideological partnership. But this partnership got looser in time. The government started to intervene every time it was disturbed.

In this context, some of the liberal journalists claimed that they experienced fear within the organization through direct contact with party officials in the news outlet. For instance, a journalist working for *Sabah* referred to the increasing presence of party officials at the newspaper as a source of fear:

It was the management level that underwent a transformation. The journalist cadres did not really change much. Not that many were dismissed. And yet the new management brought about changes. There were rumors that the front page of the newspaper would be sent to the headquarters of the AKP. They would tell us not to use this picture or ask why are you using this and not the other. Well, the rumor that the newspaper was sent to the headquarters was actually beyond rumor but let's say it was just a rumor. I know this because Yalçın Akdoğan was at the newspaper all the time. We would use the same elevator. We're talking of the key advisor of the prime minister. He is a scary person by the way. His eyes really scare one.

According to the long-standing journalists, who thought that their identity was excluded from the organization as the organization has changed hands, the pressure transformed the emotional climate of work in the organization as well:

If I were to look for a job today, I obviously would not look for a job at Sabah. This entire process slowly transformed the atmosphere within the organization. That atmosphere is no longer one that you would want to be part of. Politically its not a place you would want to be at. Because of the nature of journalism, people who work in news outlets can not hide their political views. This is a job that you do with words, with ideas. You constantly discuss, you say your views, one says "this is wrong", the other says "no, its not wrong." This is how the editorial office works. But when you start feeling isolated you cannot do your job. That slow change in the newspaper disturbs your entire order. I was in a position of

older brother working there for 25 years. Even that position as the older brother was disturbed. My area of influence got narrower and narrower each day.

These statements that reminded one of these journalists' emotions towards their conduct resembled the hopelessness felt by journalists who work in the mainstream media. These journalists, much like their counterparts in the mainstream media, highlight the state of the job market as a source of hopelessness and an obstacle to moving to other outlets. One senior journalist specifically underlined the complex situation encountered by younger journalists:

I have the chance to stop working because of my age. But for instance you [because of my age he says you] would have to keep on working. [When they are dismissed] people go to smaller outlets. They are obviously not paid as much as they are at a mainstream. If you make 3.5 [million TL] at a mainstream news outlet, the smaller newsoutlet tells you that there is no way that you can make that much money there. The opportunities in the big organizations are obviously different, too. When you make a phone call from there the response is much different than the response you get when you say you call from a smaller institution. Many journalists who have worked at big media outlets as reporters, journalists etc for years, they are now leaving their jobs. They are working now in education, public relations. There are also many who cannot work at all.

Status Unchanged: Fear & Respect

Journalists addressed in this section work outside the mainstream media and the proponent media in smaller independent newspapers. Specifically, the journalists whose

narratives I use as evidence in this section, have worked for *Dicle Haber Ajansı* (DIHA), *Özgür Gündem*, *Evrensel*, *IMC TV*, *Bianet*, *T24*, and *Hayat TV*. While these journalists acknowledge contemporary pressures and say that they are severely affected by these pressures, they do not think of these pressures as a new phenomenon and therefore as a source of status loss. In this context, while they cite fear certainly as part of the emotional climate prevailing in their professional relationships, unlike journalists in the mainstream they do not emphasize hopelessness. Instead they stress their love and respect for the journalistic profession.

Fear

Much like their counterparts in the mainstream media, these journalists also interpret the developments in the journalistic field over the last decade as a source of fear. In particular, they emphasize the political trials, the financial pressures directed at newspapers and stigmas associated with the newspaper as a source of pressure and therefore of fear.

Political Trials: Fear of Detainment

When these journalists talk of political trials they refer to the KCK and Ergenekon trials. While the Ergenekon trial appears more often as a source of pressure in the narratives of journalists who work in the mainstream media, KCK trials are more commonly referred to as a source of pressure in the narratives of journalists, who work in independent outlets. In a similar vein to the journalists working in the mainstream media, who highlighted the unlawfulness of Ergenekon trials, these journalists highlight the absurdity and the unlawfulness of the KCK trials, the unjust treatment they encounter in the trials and the fear generated by these trials:

The anti-terror law makes it possible to include everything in a terror case. For instance in the KCK trial, the suspects are standing next to one another and the prosecutor accuses them of working at an illegal media outlet, and of distributing the publications of an illegal media outlet. Or the anti-terror law can easily claim it illegal [for a journalist] to interview an MP from a Kurdish political party or an administrator from Kandil [referring to the PKK headquarters located at Kandil mountains]. These are punished with the anti-terror law. The prosecutor says “working at an illegal media outlet.” Well the outlet he calls illegal is Azadiya Welat or Özgür Gündem. These are newspapers that are sold in the market. You can go to a store, make a payment and buy them. If they are illegal you shouldn’t be able to buy them. But the prosecution accepts them as illegal. This entire thing is so artificial. It is a thing that really shouldn’t be happening. Obviously this brings fear with it. The person that gets tried or his/her friends get scared of interviewing such people again.

An interviewee, who was tried with the KCK, explains how the trial made her life as a reporter insufferable. She notes how much she feared from going to the police station where she worked as a journalist over the course of the trial:

My newspaper sent me to a police station to work as a reporter. I was the first woman to work at that police station as a reporter. And at the time I was being tried with the KCK. Every day when I entered the station they would check my ID and see that I was being tried with the KCK. You should have seen the looks on their faces. They looked as if they were going to kill me. So, as a reporter sued for

the KCK I was working at a police station. This was the worst! I couldn't endure it and I resigned.

Many among these journalists took for granted that they were being wiretapped. They usually addressed the fear from being wiretapped in the context of the political trials:

I didn't officially ask if I am wiretapped. But for about 15 years, I have known I am being wiretapped. In two different periods for two different reasons this has increased. First, when we were dealing with patient rights. What I encountered is that they knew everything as if they were one of us. And I was interrogated as if we were planning something against the government. An AKP MP openly asked if I had problems with the Minister of Health. The second one is because of the political trials. A family member of mine was tried on one of the trials. He has nothing to do with that organization but he is convicted of a number of years although the decision is not ascertained yet. During the trial process I was wiretapped. We couldn't understand why he was arrested when he was first arrested. We were asking ourselves "what could be the underlying reason for the arrest." I talked about this to a relative. We talked on a possible scenario on the phone. 2-3 hours after we talked about this, the police interrogated him [the detained relative] about it. They could not have known about it otherwise. All my phones are wiretapped. In the newsoutlet that I am working at, too. They listen to all of our phones and we assume that they also do surveillance in the building.

These journalists often emphasize that being wiretapped has become ordinary in Turkish journalism and that the entire world knows about it. One journalist presented a story to illustrate this point:

It was two years ago. A number of writers from the European Parliament asked to schedule an appointment with ÇGD. We scheduled an appointment. Our foundation is not that comfortable for such a meeting. It's a small apartment. But it has a nice porch. So we prepared a table outside in the garden. It was summer. The parliamentarian visiting us said "hi" and the next question he asked was "why did you prepare the tables here, are you afraid of being wiretapped inside?" He was right! I never thought. But, the entire world knows that people are wiretapped in Turkey.

In this context, journalists generally note that they do not allow the fear of being wiretapped to affect their journalistic practices:

We do not really care about it [being wiretapped]. We just continue the way we would otherwise do. We do not hide. What we do is a public profession, so we do it publicly.

However, they also note that while these wiretappings do not affect their activities from one moment to another, they nevertheless create an atmosphere of uncertainty. For instance, a journalist explained that the fact that convicts' private lives are made a matter in the political trials makes them talk less about their private matters on the phone:

They cannot directly use any of that information. It's not useful for them. But they probably collect the information. Later if an incident comes up, they may cut them and use parts of them against us. But this does not change our attitude. Clearly, it does not affect your acts from one moment to another but it creates an atmosphere of uncertainty. Clearly, talking about private matters is now minimized. To the extent that your private life turns into a matter [in these trials]

you automatically tone down those details. You learn to express those details through other ways.

Financial Obstacles: Fear of Holds on Distribution

Journalists also note that much of the difficulty associated with their professional conduct relates to their economic resources. They note that they are actually not much different from the mainstream newspapers like *Hürriyet* or *Milliyet* in terms of journalism and newsmaking, and that they actually make better news from time to time. However, they lack the equipment capacity of the mainstream media:

For instance Ciner Holding. They have mining investments at many locations. They try to get the tender offers and they obviously censor the news about these. People, who work at institutions like ours; because we do not enter tender offers, because we do not even have advertisements, we can make such news. But we cannot get such news heard. This is our problem. For instance, many workers die at Ciner's businesses because there are no proper safety measures. But we don't even get to hear about these workers. We make news about them. In a way we struggle against Ciner and the like. We struggle against their large buildings, huge investments. But our resources are very limited. In journalism, the first thing we learn about is that we should first protect ourselves and then our equipment. At our institution, we joke that we should first protect our equipment like our cameras and then ourselves.

These journalists particularly emphasize the difficulties they encounter in the distribution of their publications. They add that while they target smaller numbers in

readership, this does not make them exempt from pressures. A journalist gives the following example:

They fined Ulusal Kanal and Halk TV [two small TV channels]. They could not do the same to Hayat TV. It is broadcasting from abroad. So, they said let's cut their broadcast. We received a notification that our broadcasts would be cut off after a certain date. Protests etc. Then we retreated, we decided to enter under the control of RTÜK. Since then the channel is extremely careful with its broadcasts.

These journalists note that financial pressures such as shutting off the newsoutlet or fines threaten their broadcasts or publications, and hence constitute a source of fear for the news organization. Journalists also highlight manipulation of sales as another method of stalling their connection to the readers. A journalist gives the example of how their newspapers' distribution was hindered through unlawful methods pursued by the officials:

The government calls and says "do not sell these newspapers." They call the newspaper vendors. For example, the kiosks [that sell newspapers] in the subway line all belong to the same person. They text this person and say: "don't sell these newspapers. If anyone asks, you should say that you sold them all. You can then return all the newspapers in the evening." We have some customers who always buy the newspaper from these kiosks. These customers called [the newspaper] and asked why these kiosks were short of our newspaper. So, we sent a reporter to understand what was happening. Our reporter talked to the kiosks in the subway line. None of them had our newspaper. And we asked if they had three other critical newspapers. The kiosks did not have these newspapers, either. In the evenings we receive delivery notes of the newspapers' distribution. There you can

see how many newspapers are sent to the kiosk, how many are sold, and how many are returned. We saw that 75 Sözcü newspapers came and all 75 of them were returned. 4 Evrensel newspapers came and all 4 Evrensel were returned. When we asked to the kiosks how this happens, they said that there should have been a problem with the registration. But we know. This is how they punish when they cannot stop you by other means.

Stigmas: Being the Usual Suspect

Many of these journalists emphasize that they usually do not encounter the same pressures within their organizations as do the journalists who work in the mainstream media. Instead, these journalists emphasize the pressures put on their outlets not only by the government but also by other media outlets, journalists and their news sources. One journalist, for instance, highlights the uneasiness of news sources in talking to their news outlets:

Because we work at a critical media outlet we do not feel an organizational pressure. We do not have much of a problem with our institution. But our news sources have a problem. It is not the same thing to have your narrative published at DIHA or at Özgür Gündem [two independent news outlets that are closely tied to the Kurdish political movement] and to have your narrative published at Radikal [a mainstream media outlet]. Even if that news source is going to say the exact same thing, he knows quite well that to have that narrative published at DIHA is not good for him. That's why they fear. They fear that their names may appear in an operation [conducted to DIHA] or in a wiretapping.

To make a similar point, another journalist tells a story, where her newssource has begged her to remove his name from her computer:

Once I did a story about the Blacksea region. It was a very simple piece. It had nothing to do with politics. A residential site was built and the news was about that. The person who constructed the site is a friend of mine. He called me. He begged, he literally begged: “please do not let my name be found on that computer.” I told him that I removed the news, that I removed it from my email and that there is nothing in the news. He went on to say “no, please do not let my name appear there.” This is how people think!

Journalists also note that they are treated differently when the name of their institution is seen. One journalist working for DIHA notes that a very famous commentator, who appears on mainstream TV channels every other day, asked him to not disclose his name when he gave his opinion to the news agency:

I asked this person to present his opinion on a specific topic. He talked for half an hour. He presented his views. But then at the end he said you’re not going to give my name. This is something that we encounter all the time.

Similarly, journalists note that their news are often used by mainstream media outlets but the name of their newsagency is not cited in the news:

The mainstream uses many of our stories. But they don’t cite our name. For instance, it was our friends who did the story about the Pozantı prison [where children were molested]. Similarly, our friends were the first to report from Roboski [where Turkish planes bombed villagers] or on the villages that were set on fire or many other issues that are considered as taboo in Turkey. We make the

news, one week later they [the mainstream media outlets] publish it. Radikal publishes it. I am not saying that they don't do good jobs. They also do a really good job. But they don't cite our name when it's our news.

Overall, these journalists feel resentment towards both their newssources, their colleagues in the mainstream media and the state for being stigmatized as political enemies. However, neither such resentment nor the fear from incarceration and financial pressures turn these journalists against the profession. To the contrary, their definition of the profession as a means of struggle against the state pressure makes them more resilient. This is most clearly shown in the lack of hopelessness in their narratives of professional practice.

Respect for the Profession

While these journalists address fear as a significant component of the emotional climate they endure, unlike the journalists who work in the mainstream media their narratives of fear are not coupled with hopelessness about journalism. Instead, fear is often addressed as a prevailing emotion that needs to be overcome:

We obviously fear. But what matters is whether we succeed or fail to cope with fear. I fear but I try not to be a coward. I try to overcome fear, but I don't know to what extent I succeed in overcoming my fear.

The fact that they interpret the pressures as a continuation of past pressures lets them evaluate their job as a form of contentious activity against state pressure and hence overcoming fear. In this context, they claim love for the profession and respect for journalism. Moreover, many of these journalists criticize their colleagues working at the mainstream media stations for reproducing the system. Accepting the severe structural

conditions in the journalistic profession, they claim journalism cannot really be conducted at the mainstream. They note:

Many accept this [system] as it is. There are times when I was not able to pay my rent. Many have this self-censorship, self-control. In journalism you have the power to reach the people that others cannot reach. This leads to an ego. People don't want to lose that position. It doesn't work if you want to protect that position, on the one hand, and stand principled, on the other. You have to give up one or the other.

One journalist gives an example of what mainstream media reporters experience in the field and notes that he is happy he does not have to experience that:

At the funeral of Berkin Elvan [a 15 year old boy who was killed by a tear-gas canister fired by the police during the Gezi protests], a TV channel had to take off the logo of its channel from the microphone. They cannot face the public. Similarly, at Gezi they were manhandled by the protesters. This is what they experience. I am happy that I don't have to experience that. We reporters are not the ones to determine the editorial policies of the newspapers. We are just reporters. We are all from good universities. We speak 2-3 languages. Instead of giving up journalism for earning a little more, instead of being exploited it makes much more sense to strengthen the critical practice of journalism. We need solidarity. That's how I think and how I feel.

Similarly, another journalist notes that those working in the mainstream are always at risk of being fired. Here, on the other hand, he adds, you do not get paid well but you work with conscience:

Those who work in the mainstream work there for better salaries. We have many friends among them. They have economic needs and they go there. But what happens then. The newspaper gets closed and they remain unemployed. I always say let's strengthen the critical outlets. Be it low salary! Let's work with low salary but have conscience. We should strengthen such journalism. We need critical journalism.

Conclusion

State pressure on the media is not a new phenomenon in Turkey. However, as the power hierarchies both within the state and among the media owners and politicians were destabilized, so were the terms of pressure. The kinds of pressure exerted between 2002 and 2013 differed from the pressure in the past primarily because those who exerted the pressure have changed. New oppressors redefined the targets of pressure as well. This meant a new emotional climate in journalists' professional relationships.

Scholars note that emotional climates are based on collective experience. Accordingly, people must interact with one another either directly or by hearing about events that have happened to others about what is happening (Rivera and Paez 2007). In the last two chapters, I have shown that the practices of the government that destabilized power hierarchies either directly or indirectly affected journalists' emotional climates. Journalists working at mainstream media outlets, non-proponent journalists working at proponent outlets and journalists working at independent outlets shared the feeling of fear. The first two groups of journalists differed from those working at independent outlets for enduring their jobs in a state of hopelessness. Finally, religious-conservative journalists working at

proponent outlets who expressed admiration for the prime minister and likemindedness with the party refrained from mentioning fear and hopelessness as a feature of their professional atmosphere.

The emotional climates prevailing in the media affected the practice of journalism in the field. Correspondingly, in the next two chapters I explain how varying emotional climates led to varying practices in news-making and in the organizations and movements of the field.

CHAPTER 7

THE NEW FIELD OF JOURNALISM: NEWS-MAKING PRACTICES

Park (1941) defines propaganda as the opposite of news. In his definition, propaganda serves to link events together around a common and strongly defined notion of a singular truth. It expresses its message with a greater sense of force and obligation. This obligation is to be found in the news narratives. News, on the other hand, tends to undercut the power of propaganda. It resists being incorporated into a singular truth, and is accompanied by discussion and public opinion formation. Park notes that news, particularly when it is reported as a series of disconnected events, tends to disperse attention and intensify differences in a way that weakens the desired effects of propagandists.

In Turkey, events communicated via the media throughout the 2000s increasingly came to be incorporated into a singular truth. This is reflected in the decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the media. In the introduction, I established that this decline is a consequence of journalists' practices. Then I took a closer look at the destabilization in power hierarchies and journalists' interpretation of this destabilization between 2002 and 2013, demonstrating the ties between these macro and micro processes. In this chapter, I explain how varying interpretations of the destabilization affected journalists' news-making practices and in turn led to a decline in the plurality of opinions -- in other words, to an increase in the propaganda disseminated via the media.

Tavory (2011) notes that when we make a choice on how to act, we reveal something of our inner traits or dispositions, not only to others but also to ourselves. Accordingly, once

we make a choice, depending on whether we were impressed or disappointed by our actions, the choice can be a source of pleasure or pain. In this context, he argues that actions provide a signal to ourselves -- that is, actions are self-signaling. In light of Tavory's theory I propose that we can think of actions and emotions as a chain. The kinds of emotional climate generated by the transformation of conditions motivate our actions, while the kinds of action motivated by these emotional climates also generate an emotion. In the field of journalism this means that practicing journalism in a particular way as an effect of the emotional climate endured in professional relationships also generates emotional signals to journalists' selves.

Correspondingly, this chapter shows not only that varying emotional climates have triggered varying forms of journalistic practice, but also that these varying forms of practice have triggered varying emotions among journalists (See Table 7 for a summary).

Table 6. Emotional Climates & Professional Practice

Media Group	Emotional Climate	Professional Practice	Consequential Emotion
Mainstream Media	Dismempowerment, Fear, Hopelessness	Self-censorship	Shame
Proponent Media	Empowerment, Admiration (for the prime minister), Likemindedness	Willing submission	Pride
Independent Media	Fear, Respect (for the profession)	Critical journalism	Pride

In three different subsections below, I discuss three forms of news-making practice which were detailed in journalists' narratives of their responses to political destabilization. These forms of practice are self-censorship, willing submission, and critical journalism. Self-censorship and willing submission are both means of producing a single truth that serves the interests of the political authority. While the former denotes unwillingness on behalf of the journalist in the production of the news, the latter denotes willingness to integrate events into

the single truth. Critical journalism, on the other hand, expresses a contentious form of practice defined in reaction to production of propaganda. In each subsection, in addition to presenting the formation of these three forms of practice, I also present the emotions they trigger, namely shame and pride.

The chapter mainly relies on in-depth interviews that I conducted with journalists. In addition to my own interviews, I also refer to interviews that were conducted with journalists by other journalists and to the books that were written by journalists to detail their observations, interpretations and experiences between 2002-2013. Finally, I also use published material from newspapers or TV channels to illustrate the kinds of news that were produced by the journalists.

Unwilling Submission (Self-Censorship): Mainstream Media

At mainstream media outlets, alignment with the government's narrative on political issues generally took the form of self-censorship. In a survey distributed in 2011 among 67 journalists (42 male and 25 female) from a variety of mainstream media outlets in Turkey, 95 percent of the respondents indicated that the government intervened in the news-making process. 89 percent indicated that the media owners did so. Respondents unanimously agreed that censorship and self-censorship were "definitely" or "fairly" common (respectively 85.1 percent and 14.9 percent), while 91.4 percent indicated that they had been resorting to self-censorship (Arsan 2011). Two years later my interviewees who work in the mainstream media confirmed the results of this survey by unanimously noting that self-censorship is widespread in the mainstream media and that they practice it.

Self-censorship is a form of professional practice. As opposed to censorship wherein a political, religious or private party formally prohibits information's circulation, in the case of self-censorship, journalists omit or distort the news or change the emphasis in the news. The presence of self-censorship obviously points to the presence of some form of soft censorship where a political, religious or private party puts pressure on journalists to prevent circulation of information. Yet, it is nonetheless the journalist that takes action and distorts the production of news to avoid punishment by the power structure. Hence, self-censorship is a conscious act wherein journalists deliberately refrain from expressing themselves in the way they actually intend. When journalists practice self-censorship they consciously disregard the ethical premises of journalism such as accuracy, objectivity, or non-distortion.

Along this definition, in my interviews, journalists defined self-censorship first and foremost by differentiated it from censorship. They compared their practice of journalism during the military rule between 1980-1983, which they identified as censorship, to their contemporary practice of journalism. They indicated that today there was less room for journalism due to self-censorship:

The situation was different during the military era. They [the military] would tell us: "don't put that news in the newspaper". And we would not put that news in the newspaper. Otherwise they would shut off the newspaper. But then we would play a game of hit-and-run. We would not publish the news that they had said we should not publish, but we would find a similar story somewhere else and we

would publish that story. That's not self-censorship. There was censorship but you would not self-censor⁶⁹.

Several journalists highlighted self-censorship as the differentiating feature of today's journalism, and remarked that undefined limits make its practice much harder:

During the military order, every day sometime between 2 and 4 pm we would receive a call. There would be a major, a lieutenant, a corporal or a sergeant on the phone -- as the military rule declined so did the ranks of the officers on the phone. They would call every day and tell us which stories are banned for the day. In some cases, we did not even know of the news they had banned. ... Back then I used to think this was bad. I still think that way. But I also think that what we have today, self-censorship, is worse than censorship, because you don't know the limits. If you are a kind of person who is determined to overcome the limits enforced on you, self-censorship obviously does not matter. But otherwise you are like a bird locked in a glass room. What would the birds do [when they are locked in a glass room]? They would constantly hit their heads on the glass to come out. So they would try to overcome the limits at first. But after a while you would notice that these birds would fly away from the glass not to hit their heads. Just like them, as a journalist you begin to write way less than what you could write. It is in this sense that self-censorship is worse than censorship.

⁶⁹ This description of military era journalism is confirmed by journalist Zeynep Atikkan, who was interviewed by Kalyoncu (2002). In the interview Atikkan notes: "During the September 12, [1980] era, we would juggle many things at once. We would receive information on the topics that we were not allowed to write about. Necati Doğru, Faruk Türkoğlu and I were doing the economy pages at *Günaydın*. Politics was frozen. We would constantly brainstorm about how we could give political messages within economy news."

In defining self-censorship, journalists also remarked on the difference between self-censorship and control of the news. According to them, control involves checking whether news is accurate or not, whether it has been written by talking to the right people and by getting the counter-opinion, whether it has been well-written, or whether headlines are fit for the news. Self-censorship, they explained, is calculating whether the news hurts anyone's interests and is therefore consequential for the journalist who prepares the news. In these accounts, the interviewees highlighted the deliberate and conscious nature of self-censorship as they, for instance, noted: "you know you are doing self-censorship, you know you should not be doing it, but you still do it."

For many, self-censorship had always been a feature of the mainstream media. An editor working for *NTV* noted that the moment one starts the journalistic profession in Turkey, s/he learns what s/he is allowed to write about. After a while one normalizes the pressure and stops seeing such news without the need for an explicit pressure from outside. Yet, interviewees also noted that while self-censorship has long been the case in the mainstream media in Turkey, with the destabilization in the hierarchies the reasons behind self-censorship and the topics on which self-censorship is practiced have changed. Dağıstanlı (2014) further added that previously, stories that would be self-censored in one mainstream media outlet would nevertheless make their way to the public sphere through other mainstream outlets. After the destabilization, however, such news subjects can not be presented in the mainstream media at all.

The interviewees commonly organized their narratives on self-censorship around the emotions of fear and hopelessness and cited these emotions as the main trigger behind their practice of self-censorship. Through these emotion narratives they connected their practice of

self-censorship to the conditions created by the destabilization in power hierarchies and the transformation in the ownership structures over the 1980s and the 1990s. Moreover, they pointed out that continuously practicing self-censorship triggered the feeling of shame in their professional engagements.

Fear & Hopelessness – Self-Censorship – Shame

In the interviews journalists emphasize the fear of hurting the interests of a variety of actors who have the power to influence their work and life trajectories. Many cite the fear of political trials as the primary reason behind the practice of self-censorship:

Political trials bring about self-censorship. The person that is put on trial or his friends are afraid of doing the kinds of news that are presented as evidence of crime. They come to fear being put on trial. These are not punishments directed only at journalists like Mustafa Balbay [who was jailed in the Ergenekon trial] or others that are in prison. This is menace for us all. This is saying “you’ll be like them, I’ll jail you, too.” This is how these trials are perceived. When this perception is normalized, it brings about severe self-censorship. Self-censorship adds onto the direct pressures. In a sense, [through the trials] the prime minister uses his authority and the power of the state to exert pressure not only on a few journalists, but on us all.

The prime minister is cited as a second source of fear and therefore of self-censorship for journalists. According to the experienced journalist Hasan Cemal self-censorship in contemporary Turkey could also be called “the-mister-would-be-angry journalism”. In this definition “mister” refers to the prime minister Tayyip Erdoğan and the single truth into which the news are tried to be incorporated is implied to be the stance of the prime minister.

Here Cemal highlights the fact that journalists are afraid of the consequences of their news for the prime minister and shape their journalistic practice accordingly. The same point is raised by multiple journalists of various professional ranks.

The chief editor of the daily Radikal between 2010-2016, for instance, notes that Radikal failed to do good journalism and to protect its readership during the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials primarily because of the fear from the prime minister's rage. In his account, "given that the prime minister's rage does not know any limits", it was hard for them to go after the truth (Özvarış 2014b).

Similarly, Can Dündar, notes:

Between us and the military there was a definite order. The soldiers would make phone calls and tell us "don't write this". We would not write those stories. We would pretend as if those topics did not exist. Everyone knew how to act. Now, in contrast, we are being told: "You know what to not write about." When this is the case, the bosses at newspapers and news channels include everything in that category. You never know what is forbidden. Probably, news that would actually not upset the government is therefore not made. I was personally told: "I don't want any news in this newspaper that would upset the prime minister." I don't know what news would upset him. They get upset about anything and when they're upset they fire us. ... If you've upset the prime minister with your news once, since this means that you can upset him again, the chances for you to find a job at another newspaper are very low. The bosses who are obedient are privileged and those who are not experience unforeseen misfortunes! Hence the bosses say "let them be away from me." (T24 2013b)

Another example is provided by one of my interviewees. Accordingly, the fear of being labeled as a political enemy by the prime minister scares journalists of asking proper questions:

The journalists in the field are in a really bad situation. They can not ask direct questions to the prime minister. The questions that he does not want to receive cannot be asked to him. For example, during the mine disaster at Soma⁷⁰, there is the allegation that the prime minister has slapped someone in the face, and there is also a video where the prime minister says “if you boo the prime minister of this country you get slapped in the face!” You hear him say this in the video. Not a single journalist can ask about this incident to the prime minister. This is the atmosphere. All journalists working on the Soma issue have been moved to other positions or have been dismissed.

Another journalist narrates a similar story emphasizing the ties between fear from the prime minister and the practice of self-censorship:

Imagine at one new years eve, the prime minister leaves a building and a journalist asks him a question. The prime minister responds: “your mouth smells of alcohol, how dare you ask me questions?” This journalist was then dismissed.

Given such incidents, can you expect the reporters to make proper news?

⁷⁰ The Soma mine disaster was the explosion of a coal mine in the town of Soma of the city of Manisa in Turkey. It took place on 13 May 2014. According to the official records 301 people were killed by the explosion -- some politicians claimed that the number of the deceases exceeded 340 -- and the disaster is known as the worst mine disaster in Turkey's history. The explosion ignited protests against the AKP and the prime minister, especially after the prime minister claimed the mine deaths to be normal.

A journalist from *Habertürk* notes that as a consequence of the fear from the prime minister, a new practice has emerged among journalists. This practice, she calls “protecting the prime minister from his own talks”. Accordingly, journalists sometimes frame the talks of the prime minister in such a way as to protect him from the perceived consequences of his talk. She explains how it works:

The prime minister says something. You feel like if you present the entire speech, that would harm him or that it wouldn't be good for him, or to put it more correctly, that it would not be good for you to present him in a bad way. So you either only take parts of his talk or you put something right before and right after it as to change its framing.

Here I should note that the fear from being targeted by the prime minister also sets the tone of many TV broadcasts. The chief editor of *Habertürk* gives the example of a TV program from 2013. In 2013, during the Gezi Protests, this chief editor interviewed the prime minister live on TV. After the interview, the chief editor was widely criticized for his passive attitude during the interview. When he was later asked why he acted passively, he grounded his attitude in his fear of the prime minister:

What I saw that day, or to put it more clearly, what scared me that day was that the man sitting across me [the prime minister] was a man full of hatred. I did not want to provoke him. I feared that if I were to give him a hard time [with my questions], if I were to paint him into a corner, he could act madly. To tell you the truth, I feared that he would give the order for a new operation to Taksim [the neighborhood where Gezi Park protests were held]. The man I saw was at that point. (Özvarış 2015c)

He goes on to explain the atmosphere of the program that day. In his description, it was the prime ministers' mood that set the tone in the program:

That day the situation was extra tense. Normally, there are one or two advisors [of the prime minister] and the press advisor [of the prime minister]. They write things on papers to give reminders to the prime minister [during the interview]. That day they wanted the program to be shot at the AKP's Istanbul Quarters. It was a big hall. There were dozens of advisors, his daughter, party officials, in other words a pretty crowded group. Everyone was giving reminders to the prime minister and everyone was very tense. In my view the prime minister's team thought he would give a softening message. When he acted tough they were also surprised. One advisor said after the program: "Now we're toast!" (Özvarış 2015c) ⁷¹

I should note that in the period up to 2013 the Gülenists were also a source of fear. A journalist, who noted that phone calls from politicians to managers, from managers to departmental directors, from directors to editors were the primary means of spreading fear (Dağıstanlı 2014, 148), explained: "we would not be able to write on Fethullah Gülen or the politicians or the advisors of the prime minister. We would immediately get a call."

⁷¹ This same journalist had interviewed the prime minister back in 2004. He cites his experience in 2004 as an evidence of the change in their relationship with the prime minister. According to the chief editor, in that interview, the prime minister had kindly requested him not to ask any questions about the headscarf issue. He then notes that when the program started the headscarf issue was the first thing for him to ask to the prime minister. Later during the break, when the prime minister asked why he asked about it, his response was "you reminded me of the question" (Özvarış 2015c).

As a third trigger behind self-censorship, interviewees emphasized the atmosphere of fear prevailing in the workplace, in other words the fear of unemployment. Many of my interviewees refer to the Roboski (Uludere) incident of 2011 as an example of how the atmosphere of fear in the workplace generated self-censorship. On December 28, 2011, an American predator drone flying over the mountains along the Iraq-Turkey border detected a surge in wireless communication. U.S. officials alerted Turkish military officials about the crossing of a suspected group of Kurdish armed militants belonging to the PKK into Turkish territory (Eralp 2015). Within a matter of hours, Turkish jets and artillery responded by bombing the group. The bombardment lasted 45 minutes. The suspected militants were actually civilian smugglers -- 38 males, 19 of which were children, along with 50 mules -- undertaking their regular weekly round trip over the mountains to sell contraband cigarettes and gasoline in the nearby black market. Only four people survived (Eralp 2015). The following morning the members of the local Human Rights Association gathered the bodily remains of the victims, along with the shrapnel pieces as legal evidence, before the security officials swept the area to cover up what had occurred. The Turkish government's official statement on the incident framed the bombing as an "accident." According to the government officials, the smugglers had been mistaken for PKK militants (Eralp 2015).

A broadcast ban was imposed on news and reports on the Roboski/Uludere massacre. A journalist from *NTV*, however, noted that the ban was imposed long after the news had arrived in their department. He added that it was the self-censorship practice of journalists working the nightshift that delayed the news in the first place:

I think Roboski was the peak [of self-censorship]. 34 people died and the stories we had prepared were not published. 34 people have been killed and by your own

aircraft! This was an allegation at the time. Everyone said, wait let's first see what the government says. And I think it was 4.5 hours later or something like that, only after the governor, or the minister of internal affairs provided a public declaration, that the news was broadcasted and obviously with the language used by the minister. This has happened even though they had all the videos, reporters, all facilities to make the news. The news was not entered. I think this is the peak. ... We have this turn based system. At night, when the news arrive during your turn and you are alone, if you are a timid person, you make a phone call to the news director and he tells you what to do. If he cannot decide, he asks to the editor-in-chief. If the editor-in-chief cannot take the responsibility, he asks to the boss. So, decisions are actually all made at the very top. That day, if the news about Roboski had been entered, I am sure they would have removed it from the website in three minutes. In that incident, taking the initiative wouldn't have helped. But nevertheless it was the journalist who made the decision not to enter the news in the first place.

Another journalist from *Habertürk* similarly noted that the Roboski/Uludere incident was a clear example of self-censorship:

We did not broadcast it until there was a public declaration on the incident, until the Anadolu News Agency [State News Agency] made news about it. Everyone knew, everyone talked about it on social media or the contentious websites but we did not broadcast it.

In many cases of self-censorship, uncertainty about what news can be harmful or consequential for a journalist increased the intensity of self-censorship. This is most clearly

revealed by examples where journalists are scolded by their bosses for going too far in self-censorship. One such case was experienced during the 2013 Gezi Protests. During the protests banners were hung on the Atatürk Cultural Center at Taksim Square. In the TV presentation of the Atatürk Cultural Center, *NTV* had removed the name of the prime minister from the banner that said “Shut Up Tayyip”. One may think that this change was instructed by political authorities in phone calls, but it turns out that it was a journalist who made the decision to remove the name of the prime minister. In fact, this journalist went so far in self-censorship that he was scolded later. The interviewee who told me about this incident noted that in this case, self-censorship was a consequence of both fear and uncertainty prevailing in the workplace:

This was obviously a consequence of the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty in the channel. It was about being more royalist than the king! At some point you start doing things even those at the top would not expect you to do.

Similarly, citing fear in the workplace as a trigger, another journalist gave the example of how he practiced self-censorship in reporting the effects of Gezi protests:

One time I asked the journalist working for me to prepare an overview of how the year 2013 went for the market. One of the most important events for the markets in Turkey in 2013 was the Gezi protests. It affected the markets a lot and it had multiple economic effects. So the journalist asked me if he should include the Gezi protests as an important event. I thought about it. I thought it was the single most important event. The journalist said he was preparing a video clip. I said: Just put one shot of Gezi, don't emphasize it. I also told him not to write anything

underneath. We could have actually written that it affected tourism a lot, that consumption has stopped etc. There was a lot to be said.

While fear of trials, fear of the prime minister and fear in the workplace are cited as the major constituents of the emotional climate that triggered self-censorship, hopelessness is also stressed in journalists' narratives of professional practice. In the interviews, hopelessness is often provided as an explanation for continued self-censorship. Journalists refer to hopelessness to explain why they endure working under these conditions:

We talk about censorship or self-censorship but we go on. We can't do anything against it. One obviously has to make his/her living and go on living. I have a child. But then it's not an excuse to say I have a child. So many people pay such a big price. But then I also think, what is going to change when I leave. I mean, they are going to hire another person and he is going to do the same job.

In general, these narratives of emotion suggest that the journalist who fears being fired or incarcerated submits to the news narrative imposed onto him/her. The same journalist that feels uncertain about the limits of submission, at times goes further in self-censorship than what is expected of him or her by the authorities. The same journalist that sees no hopes in transforming the system continues to practice self-censorship. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the practice and endurance of self-censorship is also consequential for the journalist in the sense of the emotions triggered by such practice of journalism.

My interviewees noted that the loss of quality in the news content resulting from the submission to the government narrative on the news led to a decline in the respect shown to the profession and the professionals. In these accounts, the loss of respect was two sided. On the one hand, respect shown by the public had declined. On the other, for many journalists

squeezed between the ideals of a profession and the obligations of subsistence, the limits put around their capabilities as journalists had led to loss of meaning attached to the work, estrangement from the job, and shame for actively contributing to such practice of journalism.

Many of my interviewees indicated that they did not feel like they were doing journalism anymore. One described his editorial duties as “copy-paste journalism” and as a decline in the creative aspect of journalism:

I don't think editors are doing a creative job anymore. I am an editor but I don't think I work as an editor. I just do what they tell me to do. I feel like a machine, or more like someone who operates a construction equipment. You know, they tell you from the walkie talkie that you need to move the stone from one place to another. What we do is like that. We use the mouse more than the keyboard. That's horrifying. You don't really write anything. There are things that are told you to do, and you copy and paste them. There is no creativity. Editors normally do a creative job. Even your smallest intervention creates a difference. That doesn't exist anymore. You constantly think: “what happens if I do this, what happens if I do that. What will they tell me if I write this etc.” Given the atmosphere of fear, I believe it would be more appropriate to call us operators rather than editors.

Another journalist noted that it would be more appropriate to call the kind of journalism practiced in the mainstream media as “a secretarial job, where they put the things that they are *allowed* to say into a certain form, -- not journalism, where you speak and write about truths.” He added that as a consequence of this practice he came to hate his job:

Imagine.. Egemen Bağış [the Minister of European Union Affairs at the time] gives a public speech and claims that the media has never ever been as free as it has been now. He says this, and we turn this speech into news. I do this. This is my job. I hate it, I curse at it, but I do it. ... If I were to chose my job today, I would definitely not choose to become a journalist. I would be an advertisement agent or something like that. I was an idealist when I was young. I didn't like the idea of working in the advertisement sector before. That's why I chose to become a journalist. I still don't like the advertisement business. But there is no moral satisfaction in journalism anymore. So, why am I actually enduring this.

Journalists also noted that enduring self-censorship in this manner on a daily basis triggered the shame of contributing to the reproduction of the system:

I go to work everyday, witness the censorship going on, and practice self-censorship. I am a left-leaning journalist and so are most of my friends. Unlike me most of them work in oppositional media stations. They either don't earn much money or they don't earn any. After work or on the weekends, I usually meet them and feel ashamed for what I do here. But I have to do this. I have to pay for rent and I have two children that go to school. This is one of the few media stations that pays a salary on a regular basis. I stopped complaining about what is going on here for a while now. The moment I start talking, criticizing what is going on, I feel as if I have two personalities, that I am hypocritical in acting one way and talking another. I don't see this as journalism anymore. But I have to keep on doing this.

Dağıstanlı (2014) makes a similar remark. He notes that when he was doing interviews for his book on censorship in Turkey, he realized that the practice of self-censorship triggered shame among journalists:

One interviewee seemed to not want to talk about his own experiences, but he was also disturbed by his own silence. This man that I met for the first time in my life all of a sudden began to tell about his own experiences with an unexpected sincerity and truthfulness: “Everyday my personality is being smashed. I feel debased. I have two children and I put them through education. I endure this pressure for them. What can I do! I would be relieved if I died.” (Dağıstanlı 2014, 35).

Contributing to production of power through propaganda despite believing that journalism should be practiced differently is what triggers shame and estrangement in professional relationships. In other words, it is the element of unwillingness in journalists' submission to the authority's news narrative that leads to the emergence of feelings of estrangement and shame. Journalists confirm this as they note that shame is a sign of the incongruence between their hearts and their minds. Several journalists make this point when they explain what differentiates them from those working at proponent institutions. The distinction they make is that what they feel in their hearts goes against their daily professional practices:

Our situation is different from those who work for Sabah, or YeniŞafak. Their newspapers are, for example, against the Gezi movement. I check these journalists' own claims and thoughts [about the Gezi]. They are also supporters of the AKP. There is an alignment between the journalists and the political

authority. It has never been like that here. Here no one cares about the other's personal opinion. What matters is that you don't put your opinion on the front page.

Other journalists present similar accounts. They directly refer to shame as the emotion that distinguishes them from those at proponent outlets and who willingly align their narratives with the narrative of the government. Tuğrul Eryılmaz, for instance, who worked as the editorial director of *Radikal İki*, the weekend supplement of the daily *Radikal*, notes that he would engage in censorship but also feel ashamed of doing such journalism:

For instance when someone [who writes for Radikal İki] would call the PKK as guerilla, I would say "let's not call it that way." I convinced many among our columnists, academics or politicians by saying that let's use this sentence in this way. But I say this proudly: I was the one doing it the least and at least I knew to get ashamed for it. I did not defend it [what I was doing] (Özvarış 2014c).

For many journalists shame became much more apparent after they experienced events where propaganda reached the peak. The 2011 Roboski (Uludere) bombings present an example. Many journalists referred to this event to present the feelings they experience for continuing with the practice of self-censorship:

I woke up in the morning. When I wake up I first check twitter. [That day] I saw the news on Uludere broadcasted by BBC. I said "Oh, God." I entered the web page of Milliyet and then all the others [mainstream media outlets], and there was no word about it. Then I came here [referring to his workplace]. Everyone knows. 35 people died. It's evident. It's there. They have been bombed. BBC, CNN [International] all talk about it. But we don't. We don't give it. The incident takes place at 2 a.m. and they told us not to do any news about it

until 11.30 am, and we did not. No one broadcasted it. Not even a single channel. Until the military provided a public declaration! That showed me. I mean, you know it, everyone knows it, but you don't broadcast it. It's then that you start thinking about what you do and how you're going to continue with this. I hadn't experienced this before. So, I went to [the other TV channel, NTV] in our building and asked the friends there: Aren't you going to broadcast this? They said no, we cannot. 35 people. This is a big number. This is how we got democratized!

Willing Submission: Proponent Media

Alignment with government's narrative on political issues at proponent media outlets is widely labeled propaganda by journalists. It is not only the long-time critics of proponent journalists who call this practice propaganda, but also those who worked at these institutions and have diverged from the AKP's views after 2011. For instance, Doğan Ertuğrul, who resigned from pro-government media in 2014, after working at the daily Star for seven years, claims that news-making in newspapers like Star had long turned into "black propaganda". Yusuf Kaplan, who continues to write at *YeniŞafak*, in describing such practice, notes that "this is not journalism but lack of principles." (Özvarış 2012). Similarly, a journalist who was working at *Sabah* up to 2014 and was contributing to the front page stated that the dominant form of news-making at *Sabah* was propaganda.

Many of these journalists note that journalism at proponent institutions turned into propaganda with the transfer of ownership to proponent businessmen:

Well [at Sabah] I did not experience censorship at first and I did not feel the need to self-censor. At the time of Turgay Ciner [the then owner of the newspaper] as

well as during the transition time under TMSF, I personally did not experience anything negative. I made news that could have been published at Özgür Gündem or Radikal. This news can be called news from a lefty perspective. So, there was not a restrictive atmosphere in the newspaper. Yet these last owners, especially after the “Not enough but yes” process [referring to the referendum in 2010] a lot has changed in our mundane lives. We can no longer make news about the government or those in close circles with the government. You can make news about health such as “this hormone causes this.” And even news about health cannot touch on scandals in the health system. They always have to be success stories about the Turks and the government. Obviously, you can say how well people are treated in the hospital! That’s what news-making at these outlets entails.

At proponent media outlets, alignment with the government’s narrative on political issues made one of its most clear appearances during the political trials. The Gülenist daily *Zaman* took the lead in running stories against the convicts of the Ergenekon, Balyoz and KCK trials. Headlines of the era included “Operation is not to DTP but to PKK” (15.04.2009) (implying that the operations did not target Kurdish politicians but terrorists), “A Strike on the PKK’s Urban Cadres” (the names of the detained were listed under this headline and included elected mayors and vice-presidents of the DTP), and “TTB [Turkish Medical Association]: We are all Saylan” which was published next to another headline that said: “Those who said we are Balbay regretted” (14.04.2009) (implying that those who side with suspects of Ergenekon regret it later). With these headlines the daily *Zaman* openly took sides with the trials, accusing the suspects of terrorism. The daily *YeniŞafak* ran similar

headlines during the trial process. For instance, they accused the prosecutor, who was arrested in the Ergenekon trial, of terrorism with headlines such as “Lucky Appointment to the Suspected Prosecutor” or “The Deep Room of the CHP Prosecutor”.

As addressed in the third chapter, during the political trials, the government and the AKP politicians worked to establish a front of political enemies tying the suspects of the Ergenekon trial to the CHP, the mainstream media, the Fenerbahçe soccer club, the military and the judiciary⁷². These stories by the proponent media similarly established perceived relationships between suspects of various trials while also disseminating the idea of an enemy front. For instance, long before the trial for match-fixing in soccer began in 2011, the Fenerbahçe soccer club and its fan clubs were accused of being associated with Ergenekon. *Taraf* newspaper reported in March 29, 2009, that it was Ergenekon that prepared and hung the banners “We are soldiers of Mustafa Kemal” to the Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium of the Fenerbahçe Soccer team. In the news, it was also mentioned that in the indictment of the trial one suspect asked another whether they could get financial support from Fenerbahçe for the plans of Ergenekon (Taraf 2009). Columnists at other proponent outlets such as *Star* and *YeniŞafak* also worked to establish a front of enemies, tying the secular business world and

⁷² Here I should note that while proponent news-outlets produced content to present the mainstream media as part of the enemy front they collaborated on regulation of content. On October 1, 2012, *Akşam*, *Bugün*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Fanatik*, *Fotomaç*, *Güneş*, *Habertürk*, *Hürriyet*, *Daily News*, *Milliyet*, *Posta*, *Radikal*, *Sabah*, *Star*, *Takvim*, *Today’s Zaman*, *Türkiye*, *Vatan*, *Yeni Şafak* and *Zaman* newspapers signed a joint declaration claiming, “newspapers’ content only belongs to newspapers.” Accordingly, news, columns, photographs, satires, graphics, lines or page designs produced by the signatories would not be allowed to be used by other parties. They claimed the declaration to be an act against web sites’ violation of their intellectual property rights which undermined fair competition (Bianet 2012b).

the mainstream media to those accused of membership in Ergenekon. For instance, in 2012, Mustafa Karaalioğlu, from the daily *Star*, wrote in his column:

Is the businessworld going to accept the transformation and try to become fair or is it going to continue to finance the old order? It is those who send flowers to Silivri [the prison where convicts of Ergenekon are jailed] that get the most advertisement [from the businessworld]. (T24 2012b)

Similarly, Mehmet Ocaktan, from the daily *Star*, wrote:

We know how the media order in the old Turkey worked. We know how advertisements were distributed. The democrat and reformist media [referring to the proponent media] has been ignored in the past with stigmas of “reactionist” “bigot” or “fundamentalist”. Today the traditional media order is protected through the “wolf codes” in the distribution of advertisement. Despite all the change and democratization in Turkey, the firms that give advertisements continue to advertise in the media institutions that are remnants of the coup periods and that have their legs in Silivri [the prison where convicts of Ergenekon are jailed]. In this vein, they ensure that the media order in old Turkey is afloat. They [the mainstream media] addressed in their headlines those that organized freedom marches at Silivri for the ones who busted the Council of the State (Danıştay), killed a judge and said we killed him for God’s sake. They described them as heros of democracy. And yet they were nonetheless the ones to get the lion’s share in the distribution of advertisement. ... They praised the suspects of Ergenekon, who started a missionary hunt in the country, in their newspapers. Yet, they got the biggest share of advertisement. They praised in their headlines

the founders of JITEM, who are responsible for thousands of unsolved murders and are now at Silivri, but they got the biggest share of advertisement from the businessworld. They applauded those who gave flowers to the ones who killed the writers, the intellectuals, made Muslims look as the responsible for the killings, and incited enmity between different segments of the society. Yet they got the real share of advertisement. (T24 2012b)

Moreover, with such news-making, proponent media outlets assumed an active role in the stigmatization of the suspects of the trials. One example is the case of Türkan Saylan, a medical doctor and a well-respected civil society activist who was arrested in the Ergenekon trial. The daily *Zaman* accused ÇYDD, the foundation that she was the director of, of providing scholarships to PKK -- implying that ÇYDD collaborated with terrorists -- and of using the girls that they provide with scholarships to seduce military officers⁷³ (Akin 2014). In proponent outlets, Saylan was also presented as a lesbian, an American spy, a Christian missionary, a collaborator of the PKK, and an enemy of headscarf. She was stigmatized as an enemy on the basis of these alleged traits (Arman 2009a).

To stigmatize prominent figures standing trial, proponent outlets also published private phone records of the suspects despite the irrelevance of these phone calls to the trials. Ilhan Selçuk's records were one such example (Milliyet 2008)⁷⁴. In the case of the president of Fenerbahçe soccer club, a journalist of *Taraf* blamed him of evading draft with a fake

⁷³ One example is the news published on April 18, 2009 in *Zaman*. Accordingly, the list of students funded by ÇYDD were founded in a police raid in Diyarbakır, which was conducted to catch the alleged KCK members. Allegedly, in the records of KCK members' phonecalls students listed as funded by ÇYDD were mentioned as "one of us." (Akin 2014).

⁷⁴ Eight years after the release of the phone records and five years after his death in 2015, the prosecutors of the trial were reprimanded for violating Selçuk's right to privacy (Bianet 2015)

report. Thereby the journalist implied that the soccer club presidents' alleged corruption in the past was a proof of his corruption in soccer in the contemporary period (Baransu 2012). In another instance, *Zaman* newspaper presented a teacher as a KCK administrative, accusing him of terrorism with the headline "The teacher that is also a KCK Administrative". In reality the teacher had a similar name as a KCK member. According to the teacher, these stories were aimed at stigmatizing the teachers (Ayyıldız 2012).

Such practice in journalism reached their peak during the 2013 Gezi Protests. On June 7, 2013, *Zaman*, *Star*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Sabah*, *HaberTürk*, *Bugün* and *Türkiye* all had the same headline: "Democratic Demands are Welcome" It was a quote from Erdoğan's speech and the newspapers intended to picture Erdoğan as an understanding politician against the violent protesters. In this period, anyone who opposed the government or protested was labeled as a terrorist. In support of this claim, stories were fabricated. In one such fabricated piece, protesters were blamed of publicly peeing on a woman who wore a headscarf and had a child. The premise was that Gezi protestors, who were assumed to be disrespectful of religion, thought of the veiled woman as an AKP supporter. In support of the AKP's narrative of "victims of the protestors", prominent columnists claimed to have watched the camera recordings of the incident and corroborated the story. *Sabah* newspaper went so far as to publish a picture, which was allegedly a screen shot from the video records of the incident. The allegation was, however, later proved to be unfounded. The image published by *Sabah* was also proven to be photoshopped.

In another example of fabricated news during the Gezi Protests, the proponent daily *Yeni Akit* ran the headline "They Are Going to Kill Us Mom, Take Off Your Headscarf" (23.03.2013). According to the daily, Gezi "provocators" had insulted and attacked a veiled

teacher while she was walking with her 13 year old daughter. During the Gezi Protests, Yiğit Bulut, a critic-turned-ardent AKP supporter, has been named chief advisor to Erdoğan. He insisted that there was an international conspiracy to kill the prime minister via “telekinesis.”

According to journalists working at proponent media outlets such news-making was made possible by the likemindedness between the newspaper managers and the prime minister. In other words, in a similar vein to what Hasan Cemal named “mister-would-be-angry journalism” at the mainstream media outlets, at proponent outlets news-making entailed representing the AKP’s and more specifically the prime minister’s point of view. A journalist from the daily *Star*, when he explains what kind of news can be printed in the *Star*, notes that anything that conflicts with the party’s views would be excluded from the newspaper:

News that supports the Gezi protests cannot make it into the daily Star. That’s clear. Tough critiques directed at the prime minister by the opposition parties would not make it into the daily Star. There are lots of things that relate to domestic and foreign politics. Since the very beginning Star made news in parallel to the government and reacted harshly to the coup in Egypt. But then a journalist friend made an interview with Rashid Gannushi where he explained how they reached consensus with various groups in Tunis and how their experience differed from the Egyptian Ihwan. The interview was not aligned with Star’s editorial line but we nonetheless included it in the newspaper. ... News that is thought to harm the peace process [with the Kurds] cannot make it into the daily Star. ... There is a clear difference between Star’s editorial line on Alevis before the 2010 referendum and after the 2010 referandum. Before the

referendum we made news about the importance of Alevis' djemevi [places of worship] and that this should also be known by other segments of the society. Later, the match-up between the Gezi [protests] and Alevis was used by the government. Things said about the CHP president's Alevi identity go down into the history. ... Not a single story about gay parades has made it into the daily Star. But this one is not really about the political authority. Sabah newspaper even when it's the most libertarian refused to make news on Zeki Müren [a famous homosexual singer] saying that it was a "family newspaper". (Özvarış 2014a)

This journalist also adds that whether things can make it into the news in proponent outlets is decided on the basis of the prime minister's attitude towards these things. Hence, as the prime minister's attitude towards an issue changes, so does the editorial policy of the news outlet towards that issue:

Bülent Ersoy [a famous transgender singer] would not make it into news in Sabah until she appeared in the same photograph with the prime minister during the prime minister's meeting with artists. This is the whole point. Even this attains legitimacy [as news] through the esteemed prime minister! (Özvarış 2014a)

Proponent newspapers consider the news related to the groups critical of the government as risky:

For instance, the funeral of Ethem Sarısülük [one of the Gezi protestors who was killed by police violence during the protests] made to the first page of the daily Star. Similarly, the meeting of the mothers of those who lost their lives during the

Gezi protests made to the first page of the daily Star. These have all been risky for me. (Özvarış 2014a)

In general, practices of journalism that lead to the production of such news-content in proponent media outlets can be placed into two groups: first, willing alignment with the government's news narrative, and second, unwilling alignment with the government's news narrative -- in other words, self-censorship. As noted in the previous chapter, proponent media outlets, especially those that were handed to proponent businessmen, were more heterogeneous in composition with respect to the political identities of journalists who work at these institutions. Liberal and religious-conservative journalists shared the stance of political authority for a longtime and willingly aligned their news-narrative with the government's narrative on political issues. These journalists commonly organize their narratives of professional practice through love for and likemindedness with the political authority, and through these emotion narratives they connect their news-making practice to the conditions created by the destabilization in political hierarchies.

Starting in 2011 some liberal journalists came to share the fear and hopelessness experienced by journalists working in the mainstream media. The long-standing journalists also shared the emotional climate of fear and hopelessness with their colleagues in the mainstream media. These journalists hence described their practice of journalism as self-censorship. These journalists commonly organized their narratives of journalistic practice around the emotions of fear and hopelessness, and through these emotion narratives they connected their practice of self-censorship to the conditions created by the destabilization in political hierarchies and the transformation of the ownership structures over the 1980s and the 1990s.

Willing and unwilling submission to the news narrative of the government generate two different emotions for these two groups of journalists. Those who willingly submit to government narrative take pride in their journalistic activities. Those who unwillingly submit to government narrative, on the other hand, share the feeling of shame with their colleagues who work in the mainstream media outlets.

Admiration & Likemindedness – Willing alignment – Pride

Journalists in the first group, who do not complain about aligning their news content with the government narrative on the news subject, often call this “shared wisdom” (Özvarış 2014a). Journalist Dağıstanlı’s observations confirm this statement. Dağıstanlı (2014) tells that back in September 2005 he had discussed the terms of journalism with Mustafa Karaalioğlu who was the chief editor of *YeniŞafak* at the time. He remarks that as a journalist he would never work at *Yeni Şafak* -- not because *YeniŞafak* is the newspaper of the Islamists, but because he and Karaalioğlu would not be able to agree on what journalism entails. Based on his discussion with Karaalioğlu, Dağıstanlı thinks that while he is critical of journalists who engage in thick relations with politicians, Karaalioğlu does not see this as a problem (Dağıstanlı 2014, 25).

This observation on the “shared wisdom” between higher ranks of proponent newspapers and the political authority was confirmed in the years to come. For many journalists establishing thick relations with the government did not pose a problem. They claimed to love the prime minister, share his and his cabinet’s views on politics and justified actions with a narrative of being an agent of democratization. In other words, their willing submission to the government’s news narrative was mostly grounded in their love for and likemindedness with the political authority.

For instance, Doğan Ertuğrul, who worked at the daily *Star* between 2007 and 2014, describes the production of the Kabataş news, about Gezi protesters allegedly urinating on a veiled woman. Accordingly, it was the likemindedness with the party that determined the process at *Star*:

[In the editorial discussion] They even said that there would be no legitimate ground for the Gezi protests if we publish this headline ... “We believe in that woman,” “These Gezi protestors would do anything.” These kinds of prejudices dominated any objection and counter argument. The administration of the newspaper foresaw that the government was going to turn this news into a big campaign [against the Gezi] ... When the actual video recordings were made public [and it was proven that the allegations were lies] we discussed writing an editorial column to apologize. But when the prime ministers’ attitude [support for the news] was made clear it became impossible to publish it [the apology]. (Özvarış 2014a).

Ertuğrul also notes that *Star* and other “pool media” have tried to protect Erdoğan from his own deeds by smoothing his expressions. While journalists in the mainstream media grounded the practice of “protecting the prime minister from his own talks” in fear and uncertainty, Ertuğrul grounded this practice in a desire to satisfy the wishes of the prime minister:

A newspaper might think of Erdoğan’s words of “we don’t know what is going on in those tents” [about the Gezi protesters] as frustrating and carry those to the headlines, another newspaper might think “Oh God, I wish he had not said those words, these may trigger conflict” and de-emphasize the expression. The pool

media including Star -- I am using the expression pool media to denote proximity to the government --, has tried to protect Erdoğan – in your expression – from Erdoğan himself. ... Even if protecting might not be the right expression, there are many examples of this. For instance, during the funeral of Berkin Elvan [the child that was killed during the protests by police violence], when he [the prime minister] made the crowd boo Berkin Elvan's mother I was petrified. In the editorial meeting, I said, someone has to warn the prime minister. We did not frame the news in that way. Or similarly his statement at Reyhanlı, [the prime minister said] "Our Sunni brothers died." There were many news [as these] that we thought we should not emphasize. ... Yet being reasonable was consequential. Because the prime minister does not see anyone's positions – including the Star [newspaper] – as sufficient. This was proven at many instances. When we saw the expressions that made us think "this is too harsh we should not carry this to the headlines" in the headlines of Sabah, we would joke "Oh no! The prime minister will say 'Did you see' [implying that Sabah can do it, why can't you]!"

Many of those who willingly submitted to the government's narrative on political issues grounded their love for and likemindedness with the political authority in a narrative of "shared victimhood". Accordingly, they shared the experience of being victimized by previous power holders. It is on the basis of such victimhood that they justified their journalistic practice, claimed to democratize the power imbalance between them and those who had oppressed them in the past, and took pride in transforming the "old order."

A journalist who worked at *Sabah* between 2007 and 2014, for instance, expressed his gratitude for the newspaper's stance against the "old order". Similarly, another journalist,

who was the prime minister's press advisor between 2004 and 2008 and later worked at *Sabah*, in an interview that he gave in 2015, owned the kind of journalism practiced in this era and presented it in a proud manner as a means of changing the "old ways." These narratives of changing "the old ways" are to be found also in the narratives of party politicians as illustrated in the third chapter.

Corresponding to such likemindedness, when these journalists accepted that there were problems associated with news-making at proponent institutions, they talked of problems as if they emerged only at the later stage of the AKP's rule or they chose to describe the problems as exceptional or individual mistakes. For instance, when the prime minister's former press advisor criticized the prime minister's other press advisors for being too exclusionary towards journalists who were not proponents of the government, he chose to be apologetic for these press advisors and put the blame for such exclusion on the excluded themselves:

Our media wanted Erdoğan to continue with the old ways of doing things. When they did not get what they wanted they became aggressive, they began hitting below the belt and engaged in different relations. They thought "how can we undermine him [the prime minister], how can we make him kneel down". The feeling of preventing this from happening, led them [the other press advisors] narrow down the cadres in the prime ministers' flights. (Ogun 2015)

Similarly, when journalists were asked if they think the act of presenting the accusations in the Ergenekon trial as facts and not as allegations can be considered proper journalism, they defended their practice. Doğan Ertuğrul, from the daily *Star*, for instance, noted, "there cannot be a journalistic expression as 'the alleged Ergenekon organization'". In

addition, he noted that there could have been expressions published in the newspaper that “escaped his attention” or that he thought “he didn’t approve...” But for him these were all either part of journalism or of the editorial line of the newspaper. When asked to specify the editorial line of the newspaper, he explained that the newspaper “accepted the existence of such an organization [Ergenekon] and defended the position which was later shared by the court, as well” (Özvarış 2014a). Here I should note that after 2014 as the prime minister’s stance toward the trial shifted and he started taking side with the suspects, the newspapers’ stance toward the trial also changed.

In another example, Cemal Uşşak, a columnist of *Zaman* presented his newspapers’ news-making style as the expression of a “different opinion.” When asked about *Zaman*’s attitude towards the two journalists arrested in the Ergenekon trial, he further noted:

The idea that Ahmet Şık and other colleagues in similar situation are jailed simply because of their work as journalists is owned by the people who trust in them. We will see if there are other reasons behind their incarceration when the trial process is over.

When he was asked whether journalists at *Zaman* should criticize their professional practice during the trials, Uşşak noted that even if *Zaman* had mistakes in the past, these mistakes were similar to those of other media outlets. He concluded that it was not fair to single out *Zaman* for its attitude towards the trials. In general, these accounts hinted that anything was acceptable as an opinion difference in their understanding of journalism.

Fear & Hopelessness -- Self-censorship -- Shame

Long-standing journalists and liberal journalists, who became critical of the ruling party beginning with 2011, described their practice at proponent institutions as self-

censorship. The liberals, I should note, came to practice self-censorship as their views diverged from those of the government. A liberal journalist explained in detail how she came to practice self-censorship after 2013:

One night the editor in chief called me. He told me that my column was a little long. It was really longer than usual. Then he said: "There is a sentence there." There was a sentence that directly targeted the prime minister. Could we remove that sentence. Then I took a look at the column. I thought I want to express my thoughts but that sentence is not necessary for expressing my thoughts. Its removal would not change the main idea. So I accepted censorship. But at that moment I did not really think of it as censorship. Then I wrote a poem that I would want to publish in my column. But I did not put it in my column. That's how self-censorship started. The newspaper has changed over this process. Then I started questioning myself. I was asking myself, what am I doing. Then I sent my last column. That last column had also a very small criticism of the newspaper in it. When I sent it I thought that it might lead to some problems. I thought they were going to call me. I thought that I would make my decision depending on what they would say to me on the phone. That night no one called. The next day, I woke up and I checked the newspaper. My column was not there. I bought the newspaper and the column was not there, either. So, I texted the chief editor. I asked: "What happened? I wish you had informed me on your decision." He told me: "We realized that you want to leave this work place." I said: "no" Then the conversation went impolite. So I said I have a right to publish this. He responded: "We thought you would do that" And I was really surprised.

A liberal journalist, who worked at *Sabah* up to 2014, similarly described the kind of journalism that he pursued at *Sabah* after 2012 as a form of self-censorship where he would seem to work but not actually fulfill his duties:

I was put on the shelf, so to say. But this does not mean that I didn't do anything. I went to meetings four times a day. I was like a civil servant working in the bureaucracy. I looked like I was working but I was not saying a word.

According to another liberal journalist self-censorship was quite widespread at *Sabah*, people easily normalized such practice and turned it into a habit. In her account, self-censorship was primarily grounded in the fear unemployment:

Very good journalists are now doing health related news only. It is all because they do not want to lose their jobs. This I realized when I moved from Sabah to Taraf, where one is relatively free to make news. At the beginning [at Taraf] I was hesitant about making or even offering to make news on some topics. Then I realized that this is a habit I developed at Sabah particularly in the last 2 years of my 8 years [from 2011 to 2013], and overcame it.

Another liberal journalist from *YeniŞafak* noted that self-censorship grew as the pressure grew. She remarked that it reached such a degree after the Gezi protests she had to self-censor not only her columns and TV programs but also her tweets:

Well in the January of 2013 they did not renew the contract for my [TV] program. First there was pressure on my guests and the topics we discussed. They pressured me to invite some people and not others. Due to conflicts in decision-making they did not renew my contract. Then they changed the executive editor. The new executive editor did not renew the contract, either. ... Then during the

Gezi protests, at the newspaper, first they introduced a ban on tweets. I objected and said that they have no right to tell me to stop tweeting. But I should also note that I was very careful with my tweets. I tried not trespassing the limits of what I would be able to defend in public. But they did not even want that! Friends did not tweet at all. I tweeted but I was very careful. You pay twice, three times more attention to what you say. You don't write on every subject. You stop tweeting on topics on which you would normally say "this is unacceptable".

For many, the source of fear was the prime minister. A long-standing journalist, who was fired from *Milliyet* in 2011 after his newspaper's ownership was transferred from a secularist businessmen to a proponent businessmen, grounds his practice of self-censorship in the prime minister's attitude towards journalism:

I practiced self-censorship on many topics. I worked at Milliyet with 10 percent of my capacity. Because in Turkey and in Milliyet many things became uninvestigatable and unwritable. It will get worse. When you think "if I write this they will not publish it" or "if I write this I may be fired" then you are self-censoring. [In journalism] one usually throws the news to the trashbin after one writes them. Self-censorship is throwing the news into the trashbin before even writing it. ... In Turkey, journalism was for thousands of reasons never practiced properly. Now, it turned into a profession impossible to practice because of the attitude of the prime minister. What we do is not journalism. We are pretending to do journalism (Özvarış 2012).

These journalists also cite the organizational pressures such as scolding or firing as sources of fear and hence of self-censorship. The journalist who was fired from *Milliyet*, for

instance, underlined that engaging in proper journalism was a reason for being fired from these institutions. Knowing that good examples get fired made proper journalism unimaginable for the younger generation:

Why was I fired? Is it because I was a bad journalist? Because I didn't know how to do journalism? Because I turned lies into news? Or because I was not read? No. I was fired despite the fact that I am a good journalist, I know my job very well, I am way above the average, I write the truths, I write about topics that no one else in the media writes about and I was one of the most widely read journalists in Milliyet. This is bad news for young journalists and for those who want to start the profession: the better you are in your job the higher is your chance to get fired. (Özvarış 2012)

Similarly, another long-standing journalist, who worked at *Sabah* for over 20 years until he was fired after the Gezi protests, notes that up to the point that he was fired what he practiced was self-censorship. He emphasized that seeing other people get fired or scolded enhanced the practice of self-censorship in the newspaper:

People say, well the boss has changed, now we have to be more careful. That's self-censorship. This is explicitly pronounced. Things do not have to be directly done to you. When you witness your friend being scolded or hear of your editor being called by the boss to censor a story, you start not making that kind of news to avoid being scolded or being censored.

These accounts, much like the accounts of journalists who work at mainstream media outlets, connected the fear of being fired and the fear of being scolded to the practice of self-censorship. And much like their counterparts in the mainstream media, practicing self-

censorship aroused feelings of estrangement and shame in the journalists who defined their practice as self-censorship.

An experienced journalist, who worked for Sabah and helped in preparing the front page up to the Gezi events, noted that he hated what he was doing, that he swore every day for going to work, that in time he lost his urge to intervene in the news-making process, and that now [during the protests] he is staying back because he cannot practice such journalism anymore.

Another liberal journalist, who worked at *Sabah* for 7 years and became critical of the newspaper after 2012, noted that there were times when he questioned whether what he did in preparing the news for the front page -- he was doing this during the Gezi protests as well - - was a mirror image of what Adolf Eichmann did:

Yes, I normalized the evil. Did you read that book? I was very impressed by the book. I felt like Adolf Eichman for a while. I mean, was I an Adolf Eichmann at Sabah. I thought that what I did there was not much different than that. Because, that man, you know, Adolf Eichman, he says at the court: "I am actually not a bad person, I like the Jews, I do what I am ordered to do, I had Jewish neighbors in Berlin, ask them about me and what a good person I am." I felt like that.

Similarly, others expressed the relief they experienced when they found out that they were fired. In these accounts, getting fired was described as becoming free from the emotion of shame:

Because of the prime minister's unfavorable attitude, journalism turned into a profession which is impossible to conduct. We are not doing journalism. We are pretending to do journalism. ... When I received the email that I was fired, I felt

bad. But since then I am getting better and better each day. I feel like I was released from a prison. Don't be surprised if you soon see me dancing in the streets and throwing roses around. Getting fired from Milliyet could have been one of the best things that I ever experienced. Because there – now I understand this better -- I was choking. For your entire life you put effort into carrying a rock to the top of a hill, and the moment you reach the top of the hill you see the rock roll down the hill. You know of Sisyphus [a king in Greek mythology, who was punished for his self-aggrandizing craftiness and deceitfulness and forced to roll an immense boulder up a hill, only to watch it come back to hit him, repeating this action for eternity]. He had to repeat this for his entire life. Imagine Sisyphus is forgiven! [That's how I feel]. (Özvarış 2012)

Critical Journalism: Independent Media

Joel Simon of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) notes that over many years of working with threatened journalists all over the world, he has found sadly that those who are most vulnerable are often the least able to appreciate danger. In his account, this is because of what he calls the normalization of risk, “a nonchalance that develops after years of living in an environment in which threats and violence are routine” (Simon 2015). In this manner, in Turkey, persistent pressure over critical journalists made them define their professional conduct as a form of resistance against pressures. In this definition, journalism required being critical. In other words, for these journalists, journalism is understood as a contentious activity. This is most clearly illustrated in their narratives of how and why they chose journalism as a profession:

I was a student at Istanbul University. There were students who had occupied the Communication school. Police was everywhere. Then the police started detaining students. One of them grasped a female student by her hair and started hitting her head against the floor. The student was crying out loud “I am a student, you cannot do this to me.” At that moment, the police saw me looking from the window. He pointed at me and said, “she is a student, not you.” Then I thought, she is critical and for being critical she is beaten. Who is the student. I am at the university but I am not engaging in any kind of critical thinking. Anyway, after a process of thinking I thought documenting would be a good way of struggling, a good way of deciphering the injustices. So I chose journalism and started working as an intern at Cumhuriyet newspaper.

In these narratives journalism is defined in opposition to propaganda. It is treated as a form of engagement against the pressures of the state in defense of rights and democracy:

In my view, journalism, by its very nature, requires one to be critical. I mean, it can be defined as not being propagandist, not writing what actually does not exist or not being the trumpet of the powerholder.

Given such a definition of journalism, journalists working at independent outlets usually ground their practice in the emotion narratives of fear, and respect for the profession. Moreover, they note that they take pride in the kind of journalism they practice.

Fear & Respect – Critical Journalism -- Pride

Journalists working in independent media acknowledge that there are plenty of reasons to be fearful. Among these they count the political as well as the economic.

However, these journalists also note that making news about those whose voices are otherwise not heard is a means of overcoming the fear:

Well fear is clearly a very human thing. One clearly fears the military or the government. Yet, for instance, when I did my news [on forced disappearances], I felt responsible for the family of the man that was forcibly disappeared by the army. The story was extremely saddening. I felt responsible towards them.

They cite the ties between them and their news subject as a source from which they derive courage against fear:

Well if you were to ask why I would be working as a journalist in these conditions, I derive courage from fear. The fear of the people that choose to hide truth gives me courage. I don't want to surrender to fear and not surrendering makes me happy. Some people like the profession because of high circulation rates others because of human relations. I like it because of the ties I have with my news sources. Yesterday there was a press meeting at Taksim and the police intervened to the workers right at the moment when they were making a press statement. At that moment I had handed the microphone to the workers. The police attacked and the microphone fell. I was looking for it as the police teargassed. Then I saw the microphone. A DISK member held it before me, I went there to get it. He said, no I am not giving it, it belongs to DIHA. This is the feeling that I like about journalism. I am there with those people and they are in solidarity with me, they look after me, too.

For these journalists the ties between them, their work and the subjects of their news is also a source of satisfaction. One journalist, for instance, notes:

For years I have this feeling [about journalism]. I go to the weekly meetings of Saturday Mothers⁷⁵. Or I report on Peace Mothers⁷⁶. When a Peace Mother tells when she sees me that “see our reporter is here” or when she says to the mainstream “you’re going to write lies but here is our reporter”, that’s my motivation for doing journalism. Every Friday the Platform to Stop Murders of Women organizes a protest event. It’s only me who goes there and reports on their protest. One day I began to attend a writing workshop and it was at the same time as this protest event. My director asked who’s going to make the news about them. I thought if I don’t go nobody is going to go and make news about them. No other outlet follows their events. So I went. Everytime I go there I feel this. If I don’t go there, are they doing it for no reason. You feel this responsibility. That’s how I feel. It’s not about the money you make. It’s really about your conscience. It’s about morality. You feel scrupulous. You also feel that other reporters respect you, too. It’s because you do all the work that they do with four other people on your own. You shoot the picture, you record on camera, you take notes. They come in groups of five. One carries the phone, the other carries the camera, the other takes notes etc. You do it all on your own and they also know that you are the one targeted by the police. You know that, too. They respect

⁷⁵ Saturday Mothers is a group that gathers every saturday in Taksim, Istanbul, to commemorate their “lost” ones and to protest in silent sit-in the forced disappearances and political murders in Turkey during the military coup-era and the state of emergency in the 1990s.

⁷⁶ Peace Mothers is a civil rights movement in Turkey that gets together since 1999. It aims to promote peace through non-violent means. Many of the women involved have lost a relative in the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state.

you. They make you feel that you are doing journalism in a different manner. Both the police and the other reporters make you feel that. That's satisfying.

This means that for these journalists, professional satisfaction resides in the agency of the profession and not in monetary gains. For this reason, when they compare their situation to the journalists in the mainstream media, they emphasize that they are better off morally even if not economically:

It's not only about my love for this organization. This is what motivates me. I think those in the mainstream are worse off. Saying wrong things to make money, saying that you don't care, it's really bad to be in that situation. We all live in bad conditions. But they work actually are under harsher conditions because they can only hope that someday some things may change in this system.

In this context, if hopelessness becomes a reason for endurance of self-censorship in the mainstream media, the agency of news-making, the agency of making the voices of the powerless heard turns into a reason for the endurance of critical journalism. These journalists view journalism conducted at independent outlets as a contentious act and invite others to join their ranks to get over with the feeling of fear and hopelessness. One journalist explicitly puts it in the following quote:

There is so much pain, massacre, human rights violation in these territories that no newspaper can really do much about. Our capacity is so limited. Sometimes we also say: "Are we the ones to save! Enough is enough!" Because violence against women does not end; tomorrow is the 23rd of April [National Sovereignty

and Children's Day in Turkey⁷⁷] but there are so many child workers, so many refugee children around. There is so much human rights violation. That's why I always say this to my friends, who work in the mainstream media. They fall for money and go to the mainstream outlets to work. An example is those who went to Karşı newspaper. Many of those who went there were friends who were working in independent media. There were those who were working at Birgün. They heard that the newspaper was going to pay 3-4 billion TL a month and they left. But what happened then. The newspaper was closed. So could Radikal be closed someday. Or Hürriyet and Milliyet. They could be closed. I always say that we should make the critical sites stronger. We could be paid little. Let's work with little salary but have our conscience. We should make the critical platforms stronger. We need critical press. I am grateful that I have not experienced this: One TV Channel had to take off its logo off when reporting from Berkin Elvan's funeral. These journalists cannot go out in public. It was the same during the Gezi protests. This is what the reporters have experienced. We, reporters, cannot determine editorial policy. We are just reporters. We are all from good universities, we cannot settle for less than what we expect. We all speak multiple languages. But let's get together at these critical domains. It's much better than being exploited to the last drop of your blood. We need more solidarity. That's what I think and what I act on.

⁷⁷ This national day is a unique event in Turkey. The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, made a present of April 23 to all the world's children to emphasize that they are the ones to build the future.

I should also note that in contrast to the journalists working in the mainstream media, who emphasize that they would not choose journalism if they had another chance, these journalists note that they don't regret having chosen journalism as a profession and that they take pride in practicing journalism in this manner:

I never regretted choosing journalism as a profession. Well, actually, journalism is a profession that one can do only if s/he loves it. It is like a virus. Once you are infected you cannot do another job. It becomes a part of you. This very much relates to the nature of the profession. Even if you don't make much money, being a public person, being known by other people gives a lot of satisfaction. To me, doing critical journalism is also a source of pride. You have the chance to have a say on what is going on. Plus, you feel responsibility towards the public. You feel satisfied for being an agent of the truth. I really don't understand those journalists who do not care about this aspect of the profession.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how news-making in Turkey became a repressed form of activity on the one hand and a contentious form of activity on the other. As events communicated via the mainstream and proponent media over the 2000s increasingly came to be incorporated into a singular truth, news-making in independent media outlets increasingly defined itself against this type of journalism, turning it into a contentious activity. While the emotional climates endured by journalists working at mainstream and proponent media outlets led to the alignment of their news-narrative with the government's narrative on political issues, the emotional climates endured by journalists working at independent outlets led them to oppose such news-making through their own professional conduct.

As mentioned in the introduction of the chapter, the chapter also presents the kinds of emotions triggered by the endurance of news-making practice as a repressed and contentious form of activity. Accordingly, while those who unwillingly submit to the government's narrative on political issues feel ashamed of their practice of journalism, those who willingly align their narrative with the government's narrative and those who conduct critical journalism take pride in their news-making practices. The next chapter demonstrates that the emotions generated by news-making practices formed the core of organizations and movements newly spawned in the journalistic field.

CHAPTER 8

THE NEW FIELD OF JOURNALISM: MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Since 2007, Turkey witnessed an unprecedented decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the media and a decline in the quality of news-making. The previous chapters explained how emotional climates prevailing in professional relationships and the predominant forms of journalistic practice generated by these emotional climates drew the limits of news-making in the field. Accordingly, events increasingly came to be linked to one another around a common and strongly defined notion of a singular truth through willing and unwilling submission to the government narrative. Such practices explain the decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the media as well as the thickening of the clusters of journalists who align their narrative with the government, on the one hand, and who split their narrative from the government's narrative on political issues, on the other.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, in addition to a decline in the plurality of opinions presented in the media, after 2007 we also witnessed vibrant mobilization in defense of freedom of expression and a boom in independent news platforms in Turkey. This means that protest participation, establishment of news outlets, and resignations from the mainstream and proponent media outlets shaped the field of journalism as much as the news-making practices. In this chapter, I explain the increase in such contentious forms of action. I ask: how did these movements, organizations and individual acts of contention come about? How do we explain the contemporaneous increase in repressed and contentious forms of organizational action among journalists?

I propose the theory of “activity spillout” as an answer to these questions. I argue that the prolonged endurance of self-censorship, a repressed form of journalistic practice generated shame. This shame triggered journalists to take action in a domain that is relatively less repressed than their workplace. Together with existing forms of critical journalism, these external actions led to an increase in contentious forms of activity among journalists. The theory is informed by the interviews I conducted with journalists who have established news outlets, resigned from their positions in the mainstream and proponent media, and/or participated in freedom of expression related protests.

A Theory of Activity Spillout: From Shame to Contention

In their article, “Spillover or Spillout? The Global Justice Movement in the United States after 9/11” Hadden and Tarrow (2007) focus on the stagnation of the 1999 Seattle WTO protests in the US and explain the weakening of the movement in reference to a combination of three factors: a repressive atmosphere towards transnational protest movements, a politically inspired linkage between global terrorism and transnational activism of all kinds, and what they call *social movement spillout*. In this argument, they define social movement spillout as the hollowing out of a social movement when its activists shift their activities to a cognate, but differently structured movement.

I expand on their notion of social movement spillout to explain the interdependence between repressed and contentious forms of social action. I argue that the vibrancy in contentious activities in defense of freedom of expression and the boom in independent news platforms in the journalistic field in Turkey can be explained by an *activity spillout*. Accordingly, self-censorship, which is a form of unwilling submission to repression, leads to

increased activity in the differently structured domains of associations, protests and online platforms. Journalists who refrain from reflecting their views in their professional settings through their news-making practices join protests, establish independent news platforms and/or resign from their workplaces. In these alternative domains of activity they seek a new means for practicing proper journalism.

In this argument, I address the emotion of shame as the motivating factor behind an activity spillout. Thomas Scheff (1994), drawing on Simmel's sociological insight that unlimited destruction is a product of broken bonds, argues that the emotional aspects of group conflict are often dismissed or lumped under non-rational motives. In his account, shame is the "master emotion" and thus is central to an understanding of group conflict and war. Scheff argues that the "labelling, segregation, and stigmatization of Germany after its defeat in World War I" created a cultural and political context in which Hitler was able to appeal to the masses. For Scheff, what made Hitler appealing to the masses was the need for Germans to experience a community that would restore societal bonds, pride, and self-confidence to their nation. This need for restoration of societal bonds was a consequence of the pulling apart of the German social structure by rapid social change and the humiliation experienced by Germans by defeat in war and the conditions of the Versailles Treaty. In this argument, Scheff makes a case that collective shame and humiliated fury were central causes in the rise of the Nazi Party (Scheff 1994).

Fromm (1941) notes that shame's power to motivate social action is ultimately rooted in the human condition that only through connections to other people and society can human beings find meaning in a universe that otherwise appears arbitrary, capricious and absurd. Clearly, this is not to say that shame leads to the same kind of social action in each society.

Shame operates differently in distinct historical periods, societies, and institutional settings depending on the meaning attached to the bonds to other people.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that journalists' unwilling submission to repression led to feelings of shame in the professional setting. Journalists felt shameful because they thought that through their journalistic practices they were reproducing a system that they very much disliked. With the theory of activity spillout I argue that the tendency to overcome the feeling of shame led to an activity spillout from their workplace to alternative domains of action. In other words, the everyday practice of self-censorship, the participation in the production of the news against one's own ideals, and the consequential emergence of the emotion of shame led to an activity spillout from the mainstream and proponent media outlets to the spheres of protest and independent news outlets, where journalists thought they would have a chance to take responsibility for their professional ideals and to connect to other members of the society in a meaningful way.

This argument that illustrates the link between emotions and contentious activity is derived from the narratives of journalists who claimed that they practice self-censorship, think the creative aspect of their jobs to be dead, and feel estrangement and shame for enduring such journalism. Importantly, they also claim to contend for the practice of proper journalism in alternative platforms as a means of overcoming these feelings. One example is presented by a journalist who claimed the use of a proper journalistic language to be a means of feeling good in the professional setting:

A journalist has to make his/her living, but s/he can also find means of resistance.

A journalist can avoid using bad language. For instance a journalist may refrain from writing "protagonist of the terror organization" or "so-called Armenian

Genocide” or “Orhan Pamuk is caught” in their news. Instead, s/he can write “the allegations about the Armenian Genocide” or “Orhan Pamuk did not want his photo to be taken”. Such verbal changes would not necessarily be refused by these organizations [media outlets]. Many would not even notice. Words make life different. Is this something? Yes it is. Correcting the language of the news is something. You would at least feel good.

Similarly, another journalist highlighted “guerilla journalism” as a means of overcoming the overwhelming effect of continuous repression:

At times we feel overwhelmed with the pressure and with being part of it. So, we do some sort of guerrilla journalism. We enter parts of a talk or frame it in such a way as to oppose the narrative enforced on us. It’s like an escape from that feeling.

Correcting the language of the news is not the only way identified by the journalists as a means of overcoming the feelings engendered by endurance of repression. Many journalists highlight other ways of contention such as joining protests in defense of their profession, resignation and/or looking for alternative ways of properly practicing journalism. Below I present three examples, namely establishment of independent news platforms, resignations, and joining of protests in defense of freedom of the press. Each of these forms of activity spillout have shaped the field of journalism in Turkey in the last decade.

Establishment of Independent News Platforms

One example of activity spillout is the emergence of the T24 independent online news platform. T24 was founded on September 1, 2009. The founder, Doğan Akin, describes the

outlet as “an independent internet newspaper that does not have a direct, indirect or coincidental tie to a person, organization or entity.” He also notes that when he founded *T24*, his goal was not only doing “another kind of journalism” but also institutionalizing “another kind of journalism”:

I had become obsessed with the idea of whether another kind of journalism was actually possible. It's not only about dreaming of another kind of journalistic practice but more like, could another kind of journalism be institutionalized.

In Akin's account, the desire to do “another kind of journalism” was a consequence of his professional experience in the mainstream media. Moreover, when he made the decision to initiate a news platform, the internet had come to offer an alternative platform for news-making:

I had been working in the mainstream media as a journalist for more than 20 years. [When the idea of establishing a news outlet first appeared to me] News had come to be consumed on the internet. I was thinking that newspapers were no longer the pulse of journalism. And I also thought that problems in the media had incrementally increased in this last era⁷⁸.

According to Akin, financial dependence and ideological obsession had killed proper journalism in Turkey. Each ideological group had a news outlet of its own, and even when they had financial independence they could not avoid ethnic and/or religious provocations. He notes that their priority at *T24* was being unaffiliated directly or indirectly with a

⁷⁸ *Bianet* presents another example of activity spillover. One of its founders similarly states that its inception in 2001 was a response to the media structure that had overwhelmed its founders over the late 1990s and they sought to say what is unsaid.

politically or economically powerful person/organization. “Another kind of journalism” had two premises: “financial independence” and “independence from ideological obsessions”. Citing financial and ideological dependence as two defining features of the existing media system in Turkey, Akin presents *T24*’s story as a reflection of his and his colleagues’ desire to overcome these problems.

Where Akin distinguishes the financial structure of *T24* from those of both the mainstream and proponent media organizations, he defines *T24*’s goal as journalism that is not “entrapped to large amounts of money.” He emphasizes that *T24* started in a small office, that they bought the technical equipment with installments on credit cards, and that the monthly expenses of the entire platform equal the salary of a single media elite in the mainstream media. In addition, he underscores the extent to which they strived for financial independence:

I was thinking about how I would finance this [institution] if I were to take the initiative [to found a new outlet]. In Turkey there had been a myriad of independent journalism initiatives. But two weeks after establishment they had begun asking for money. If you don't have a formula to finance your initiative, then that clashes with your end goal. So, I went to some companies -- companies outside the media -- and told them that their websites are really bad. I told them about the importance of websites in establishing the relationship between consumers and companies, and I told them that I can make a better website for them for half of the price whoever is doing their websites at the moment. So we made a contract and it is how I decided to establish T24. Those who work here don't make much money but they are not working informally. We regularly pay

their salaries, we pay for food, transportation etc. I think this was a good formula and to this day I have been able to survive without getting any money from a person or an organization. So much that I even refrained from taking money from some foundations in the US, Denmark, and the Netherlands. When they offered funding support for us, we thanked and declined. ... We said that they can advertise, that advertisements would be fine, but we did not accept direct [flow of] money. ... To this day, we don't have a tax debt, a premium debt. Our salaries are low, the opportunities are restricted but they will grow in time. Having grown too fast is another issue that the media in Turkey has. Media owners tried to own banks etc. We reached this point with our own budget. I preferred internet because it's not possible to establish a newspaper with a budget this small (20-25 thousand TL [approximately US \$6-7 thousand]). You need to pay for paper, for ink, for distribution. This is a lot of money and to tell you the truth it is also unnecessary. Here we invest in people. 70 % of the budget goes to the people and the rest is for rent, phone calls etc.

According to Akin, financial independence is a means to freedom from pressure. He notes that their financial independence allows them to overcome the pressures experienced by those who are financially dependent on political power:

They criticize us constantly. They criticize those who give advertisements to our organization, how the advertisement agencies distribute the advertisements etc. He [the prime minister] explicitly said this in his interview with Fatih Altaylı. These are the things [pressures] we expect now. They [the political authority] can not otherwise pressure us. What can they do. [If] They close down T24. We will

establish T25. We don't have mines, or insurance companies, we are not in debt [referring to the mainstream and proponent media outlets]. It does not mean anything to close down T24. They can pressure those who give advertisement [to us]. But this organization does not need too much money to sustain itself. Our entire monthly spendings are equal to a single media elite's monthly salary.

In his story of T24's founding Akın also emphasizes ideological independence. In this context, he highlights the multiplicity of opinions presented at T24 as a measure of proper journalism and as a means of overcoming the kind of journalism practiced in the mainstream media:

Here we try to bring together people from different political orientations. Why can they get together here? ... because we do not intentionally give ideological direction to news. Those from the left and the right are both welcome. ... We don't care about the Cemaat [referring to Gülen movement], CHP, AK Party, or MHP. Whatever the news is, we just give that. ... This is not the news outlet of a particular group. We also had our own disputes or intolerances. Some said I don't want him/her to write here. We said: "well sorry s/he will write here⁷⁹." We don't intervene into the texts of our writers so long they don't use hate speech,

⁷⁹ For instance, when Alper Görmüş began writing at T24, T24 received a strong negative reaction on how they could let him write there. Görmüş was an outspoken proponent of the Ergenekon case and a critic of the military as well as those supportive of the military-bureaucratic pre-AKP state ideology. Akın notes that Görmüş told him "if you like I can stop writing here". Akın adds that they did not want him to stop writing and that they were ready to face criticisms. According to Akın, the fact that he was a staunch supporter of the Ergenekon case and that he was criticized for his attitude during the trial did not make him a bad journalist. Apparently, due to this conflict a journalist who thought that Alper Görmüş was an ideological apparatus of the contemporary state resigned from his post. (Gazeteciler.com 2013)

and so long they don't insult people. We have Islamist, Atatürkist, pro-Cemaat, Kurdish, Turkish here. People come here and write here because we do not shame them. We try to not embarrass them with our news or columns. Well, can everyone write here? No, obviously not everyone. There are journalists in Turkey who did really embarrassing things. They cannot come here. It's not about their worldview. They do things that should under no circumstances be tolerated. We have no room for them here. For us, important is that journalists struggle in an acceptable, legitimate language.

As can also be seen in the paragraph above, shame and embarrassment are highlighted by Akın as the emotions triggered by ideological pressures on journalists and columnists in the mainstream or proponent news outlets, and as the major drive behind why ideological pressures should be avoided at *T24*. In addition, Akın notes that those journalists who themselves become a source of shame and embarrassment are also excluded from the newspaper. In other words, shame is treated as the emotion that needs to be held distant.

According to Akın, the most inspiring thing about the kind of journalism that they do at *T24* is that they can collapse the dominant media order, which they do not like, with their journalism:

We can say that with our small budget we can at least collapse the dominant order. ... This is the most inspiring aspect of T24 for us.

By emphasizing this aspect of *T24* as its most inspiring feature, Akın shows that he thinks his activity spillout from the mainstream media to the domain of independent news outlets allows him to take responsibility for his journalistic goals.

Here I should note that *T24* is not the only news platform that was established after 2007. There are many other such outlets that led to the boom in the number of independent news platforms. These include *Ötekilerin Postası*, *Diken*, *P24*, *Karşı Gazete*, *140Journos*, *Dokuz8Haber*, *P24*, *Halk TV*, *Çapul TV*, *GeziPostası*, *IMC TV* among others. *Diken*, which has a daily readership of 100-150 thousand people (Kaynak 2015), was established in January 2014 by the grand-grandson of Sedat Simavi. Sedat Simavi, who is considered among the major figures of journalism in Turkey, began to work as a journalist in 1916 and founded *Hürriyet* in 1946. Harun Simavi, the founder of *Diken*, reminds us of the shame experienced by journalists in the mainstream media when he notes that one of the goals of the online news platform is “restoring the respect and dignity that the journalistic profession deserves” (Simavi 2014). *P24 (Platform for Independent Journalism)*, similarly is an initiative founded by journalists and columnists, who have long worked in the mainstream media. It was launched in 2013 and claims that its mission is to “support and promote editorial independence in the Turkish press at a time when the journalistic profession is under fierce commercial and political pressure.” (P24 2013).

Some of these outlets are non-journalist citizen initiatives. *140Journos*, for instance, was founded after the Roboski bombings on the Turkey-Iraq border that killed 35 Kurdish villagers in 2011. At this event the mainstream and proponent media had released the first information 12 hours after the bombings. Frustrated by the lack of media coverage, a college student decided to found *140Journos* as a “datapoint” rather than a journalistic outlet (Tunç 2014). The twitter account’s followers increased during the ODATv trial when journalists were asked to leave the courtroom and *140journos* could stay in for not having a press card. One of the founders notes that just when they were about to lose their enthusiasm, civic

journalism blossomed with the Gezi protests (Geerdink 2016). Similarly, *Ötekilerin Postası* (*The Post of Others*) started as a Facebook page sharing news related to the hunger strikes of Kurdish prisoners, who demanded better conditions for the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and greater freedom for the Kurdish language in public life in Turkey. Both issues were considered taboo in the mainstream and proponent media and did not receive coverage (Tunç 2014). The founders note that they started this initiative with the question, “why do we need the mainstream media?” (Ötekilerin Postası 2012) In time, Ötekilerin Postası came to receive about 150,000 “likes” on Facebook and also became a stand-alone website, *otekilerinpostasi.org*.

Resigning and Joining an Independent News Platform

Another example of activity spillout is the individual act of resigning and joining another news platform. One such case was presented by Bekir Coşkun. Bekir Coşkun is a prominent Turkish journalist and columnist who defines himself as a staunch secularist. He has been a harsh critic of the AKP since its rise to political power in 2002 and engaged in a public quarrel with the prime minister in 2007. Coşkun was a columnist for the mainstream newspaper *Hürriyet* for 16 years until he resigned in 2009. He explains his resignation from *Hürriyet* as a consequence of the feeling that he could not continue to endure the constant violation of his values in the name of protecting the boss’ interests:

I left Hürriyet because of censorship. The editor in chief calls you and tells you:

“make your column softer, let’s get rid of this sentence or let’s not touch the one from Manisa [a city in Turkey] -- referring to Bülent Arınç [the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly and after 2009 the Deputy Prime Minister] who is from

Manisa -- or the one from Kayseri [a city in Turkey] -- referring to Abdullah Gül [the Minister of Foreign Affairs and after 2007 the President] who is from Kayseri --.” So, that was too much for me and I left and I moved to Habertürk. There, the boss kept telling me: “Do not touch the Cemaat [referring to Gülen movement]. Let’s be in good relationship with the Cemaat.” That did not work and I was fired. So, I came to Cumhuriyet. Here there is no boss.

In his book *Başın Öne Eğilmesin* (2011), the columnist explains how he felt when he was informed on the phone of his dismissal from *Habertürk*:

... Doğan Satmış [the deputy chief editor] called. He said, “I’ll tell you something, it’s between you, me and the gatepost. ... It’s better if you don’t write [your column] until the [2010] referendum. ... You had also asked for vacation, why don’t you use three days of vacation until then?” I tried to explain: “Well, when I asked for vacation we had about 1,5 months until the referendum. Now if I say I am on vacation, the readers would say “what vacation right before the referendum.” ... Doğan, could not lie. The management level, in other words the boss, had asked for this. I hung up the phone. I got really angry and I flung the telephone. I started yelling “This is not journalism, this is clowning. I am ashamed of myself and my profession.”

Elsewhere, he also added that he is intimidated by the pressures but what he strives for is not being a coward:

I fear but what matters is whether I succeed or fail to cope with fear. I try not to be a coward. It is for that reason that I try to overcome fear. I have some values. We should live in a secular society. We should have scientific thinking. We should

have free judiciary, free courts. Children shouldn't be raised to become imams but to become scientists. Women should be free. These are my ideals. Then your boss, who says he is not against these ideals, tells you to shut up. That's what kills me. These guys don't have any morality. They have only one line for morality. That is making money.

In these narratives, Bekir Coşkun highlights that it was the desire to avoid becoming a coward -- which would be a source of shame -- that led him to resign from his existing position and seek an outlet where he would be able to follow professional practices he respected. In other words, expected shame, caused by pressures within a mainstream media outlet led to an activity spillout for the journalist.

A similar case was presented by Hasan Cemal. Hasan Cemal was an experienced journalist who had been working at *Milliyet* as a columnist since 1998. *Milliyet* was a mainstream news outlet up to 2011, when it was sold to a proponent businessmen. Cemal lost his column at *Milliyet* in 2013 after his public quarrel with the prime minister on what journalism is and the prime minister's right (or lack thereof) to intervene in the journalism. Upon his resignation he joined the *T24* newsplatform. Cemal's narrative on how he joined *T24* emphasizes the limits imposed on the press in the proponent media and the spillout of activity into a platform where he saw a chance for continuing with the practice of journalism:

My column at Milliyet was closed down. It is clear that my understanding of journalism and my role in the Kurdish issue played the major role [in this]. Milliyet broadcasted Apo's [Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK] records and also the Imralı records of February 28, 2013. I saw the records on the newspaper. The editor in chief had not yet told me about them. I said: "Great

journalism.” I wrote about it [in my column]. The next day, he [the prime minister] shouted publicly: “Hell with your journalism!” He directly quoted my sentence and referred back to me, not to the newspaper. The next day, I continued. I said: “Look, journalists do the newspapers and you govern the country. We all will be at ease if we don’t mix the two to one another.” Then he [the prime minister] called Erdoğan Demirören [the owner of Milliyet]. You know, the record of this phone call was leaked. He scolded him and made him cry. His excellency (Hazret in Turkish) [the owner of Milliyet] cried! So he [the owner] instructed to the editor in chief to fire me. The editor in chief tried to handle the situation by softening, by stringing out the time [to make a decision]. For almost two weeks I was on vacation. On the third week, I said, it’s not worth it, let it go. He [the editor in chief] said it [the situation] will change. I was still in Germany, Heidelberg then. I sent my column from there. They did not publish that column, either. First they negotiated: “skip this part, remove that part.” I said: “it’s over, don’t bother any more, just tell me that you are not going to publish it.” So, I moved to T24.

Much like in Coşkun’s account, Cemal emphasized the search for an alternative platform where he would be able to practice journalism. Cemal and Coşkun were not the only ones to resign from their positions on these grounds. They were among the prominent journalists whose stories attracted relatively more attention. Yet, there were many other such resignations that reshaped the journalistic field. As a consequence of these resignations, journalists clustered in news outlets with likeminded journalists.

Protests in Defense of Press Freedom

Another example of activity spillover is journalists' participation in protests in defense of press freedom and their incarcerated colleagues. One case above all others is particularly illustrative of why protest participation is also a form of activity spillover. In 2011, Turkish prosecutors arrested two prominent journalists, Nedim Şener and Ahmet Şık, and accused them of conspiring to overthrow the government as a member of the alleged clandestine Ergenekon organization. Şık, an investigative reporter, labor activist, and academic with a leftist pedigree, was accused of working, with the assistance of Şener, on an investigative book revealing that the followers of Fethullah Gülen had infiltrated portions of the government and the security agencies, including the police. According to the indictment, the purpose of the book was to foment an environment of chaos in order to pave the way for a military coup (Simon 2015, 37-39).

Şık was indeed working on a book about the Gülen movement. Yet he was working on it without Şener, whom he barely knew. Şener, a leading investigative reporter and commentator, had recently published a book of his own about the unresolved 2007 murder of the Armenian editor Hrant Dink, whose killing he revealed was part of an anti-government plot carried out with the participation of the police, many of whom are reputedly followers of Gülen. The evidence against the two journalists was a draft of Şık's book -- titled *The Imam's Army* -- that was found on the computer of a website called ODATV. Prosecutors alleged that the journalists at ODATV were also participants in the Ergenekon conspiracy along with retired military officials and civil servants tied to the establishment. In justifying the police action and arrests, the prime minister publicly compared Şık's book to a bomb (Simon 2015, 37-39).

For many, the idea that Şık and Şener would have supported such a plot was absurd both because of the lack of evidence and because their previous investigative journalism had targeted the groups that they were allegedly associated with. The arrests of Şık and Şener therefore increased the level of international attention on press freedom issues in Turkey. Moreover, they sparked street protests in Istanbul. At the courthouse, crowds chanted in support of Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener, “Ahmet and Nedim are our pride” “Ahmet will come out, and write again.” These protests brought about the long awaited solidarity among journalists. Journalists of different political factions got together in defense of the two journalists and the freedom of the press in Turkey.

I argue that the rise of protest activity following Şık and Şener’s arrests can be explained by the concept of activity spillover, too. In an atmosphere where journalists were not able to practice their profession in the media outlets they were working at, by joining protests in defense of freedom of the press and their colleagues they manifested that they were seeking to stop enduring this system. In fact, many among the journalists, who joined the protests, explained their participation in the protests by reference to the narrative of “enough is enough.” For instance, a journalist that I interviewed noted that Ahmet and Nedim’s professional integrity augmented the support as journalists were fed up with existing conditions in the media and endurance of such conditions:

In Ankara, Ankara Journalists Association and Progressive Journalists Association are in fierce competition. The people in these organizations are very different from one another. Yet we all got together in these protests because the injustice, the pressure had reached an unprecedented level. It [Ahmet and Nedim’s case] was the straw that broke the camel’s back. When Tuncay Özkan is

arrested you can say that he is affiliated with such and such politics but for Ahmet and Nedim, they don't have such a political orientation. They are journalists. What they have written is self-evident. Ahmet wrote a book. The prime minister says books can be more dangerous than bombs. Soner Yalçın or Doğan Yurdakul. So many journalists are being incarcerated. The questions posed to them [at the court] are all journalism related. Why did you write that news, why did you wrote that book. They say these people are members of a terrorist group but they neither have a gun nor anything else.

In this account, the journalist emphasized that while supporting one or the other journalist would often mean supporting an ideological position, in Ahmet and Nedim's case journalists were inclined to get together even with those that they did not like because all knew this was a stance against the pressures directed at journalism. Similarly, another journalist, who noted that journalists do not have organized force or the awareness about the importance of being organized, adds that it was Ahmet and Nedim's case where journalists of different political backgrounds for the first time got together:

Well, I was part of the movement. Ahmet is a close friend of ours. I knew that he could never be part of a coup or support Ergenekon. I would doubt myself but not him. There are many other journalists in jail right now. But no one has the sensitivity about them. I think this is related to their political engagements.

Similarly, in a public statement, the group that organized the protest campaign for Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener, namely "Ahmet and Nedim's Journalist Friends" (ANGA) claimed that they were fighting against stigmas as well as the prevailing pressures in the press that skewed the practice of journalism:

At times they stigmatized us as pro-Ergenekon, at others as liberal or marginal.

We just organized a campaign and tried to become the voice of detained journalists. We also aimed to oppose censorship and self-censorship.

Journalists also noted that through the case of Ahmet and Nedim, they not only demanded the release of journalists but they resisted against the emotional climate of fear that was widespread in the field.

Here I should note that when I note that these protests brought together journalists that otherwise rarely come together, I refer to the journalists who work in the mainstream media or in independent media and who are critical of the government. Journalists who were proponents of the government, either Gülenists or AKP supporters, did not participate in these protests. In fact, in an interview with a journalist from Yeni Akit, I posed the question why he refrained from participating in the protests given that the protesters claimed the movement to be in defense of journalism and freedom of the press and not in defense of a particular ideology. In his response, he emphasized that the two journalists were charged with membership to a terrorist organization and given that he did not know them in person, he did not support the movement. In a sense, he referred to the stigma of “terrorist” to justify his lack of support for the resistance against repression:

These people are judged of membership to a terrorist organization. I never met them before, I don't know them, we don't know them. Maybe if I had known them, then I would go. ... I don't know them, they are accused of membership to a terrorist organization. It's very different to be a journalist and to have an ideological stance. I am affiliated with Akit. I have to respect that organization, as well. You work there, you have some relationship to that institution.

Events & Activity Spillout: 2013 Gezi Protests

For many journalists who work in the mainstream media and the proponent media the continuous practice of self-censorship became a source of shame which then triggered various forms of activity spillout. I should note that the feeling of shame became particularly evident to these journalists during particular events that were perceived as moral shocks. James Jasper (1998, 409) defines a moral shock as “an unexpected event or piece of information that raises such a sense of outrage in person that he/she becomes inclined toward political action.” In his account, whereas a “sudden grievance” implies a cognitive response to a dramatic, highly publicized occurrence, a “moral shock” conveys the emotional dimension. I argue that in the context of activity spillout, moral shocks make an individual more aware of his/her position, pushing him/her to reevaluate his/her position as well as how he/she should act in response to the event. In this vein, events that are perceived as moral shocks facilitate activity spillout from a repressed domain of activity to a relatively less repressed domain of activity.

This clearly applies to journalists as well. In the Turkish case, certain events that came as moral shocks made journalists reevaluate the agency of their professional practice in the historical process. The most obvious example of this was the 2013 Gezi Protests, which came as a moral shock to many journalists. Below I present specific examples from the 2013 Gezi Protests that were provided by the interviewees. These examples demonstrate that forms of contentious journalism increased during the Gezi protests as the feeling of shame was coupled with an event and forced journalists to reevaluate their actions and positions.

Undertaking a form of contentious activity allowed many among these journalists to overcome the feeling of shame.

In May 2013, a small protest against the redevelopment of Gezi Park in the center of Istanbul developed into a mass protest after authorities resorted to violence against the protestors (Över & Taraktaş 2017). The protests were an expression of accumulated grievances ranging from unchecked urban redevelopment, to growing restrictions on the sale of alcohol, to Erdoğan's governing style. The battle in the streets soon turned into a battle over information, with Turkey's mainstream media, fearful of the prime minister's wrath and seeking to protect their owner's business, remaining completely silent on the events during the first few days (Simon 2015). Examples of such news making are presented in the previous chapter.

During the protests dissenters expressed their indignation by rallying in front of media outlets and ridiculing reporters. Many journalists reporting from the occupied Gezi Park were also slandered by the protesters for the lack of coverage of events on their channels. The remote-broadcasting vehicles of some channels that did not report on the events were made unoperational by the protesters. When young protesters turned to social media to spread the word and share information, the prime minister lashed out, calling the protestors "bums and looters" and describing Twitter as a "menace." In the meantime other AKP politicians used twitter to denounce international journalists, to call correspondents of international news agencies in Turkey traitors and spies, and to accuse critical voices in the media of misinforming the public or orchestrating the protests. For instance, the mayor of Ankara, who is also from the AKP, started a campaign against a BBC reporter with the

hashtag “#Don’t be a spy in the name of England.” In response, the BBC issued a statement calling the campaign unacceptable (Corke, et al. 2013).

During the same period, in addition to increasing pressure by their outlets journalists were also exposed to police violence. Reporters Without Borders reported that between May and September 2013, 153 journalists were injured and 39 were arrested (Reporters Without Borders 2013, Reporters Without Borders 2014). A Freedom Press Report states that while it is hard to state the exact number of journalists fired over the period of Gezi protests, the CHP has prepared a list of 77 journalists who were fired or forced out in conjunction with the protests (Corke, et al. 2013).

In the face of the general protests and more specifically the protests directed at journalists and media outlets, journalists who personally stood in opposition to the government but had surrendered their public narrative to the pressure from their institution reevaluated their journalistic practices. They came to look for other means of expressing themselves and their contention, and of overcoming the feeling of shame. The consequence was spillout of their professional activities.

Many journalists described their feeling during the Gezi protests as “being carried away”. They noted that as a first reaction they tried to do proper journalism and when they failed to do so they got extremely angry:

During the Gezi events, I got carried away (“çok gaza geldim” in Turkish). I don’t exactly remember now but I prepared a news or a cover. Half an hour later, they intervened and said let’s change these. I stopped working and left the workplace. I went straight to the Gezi park. I was really angry, I just cursed and left.

Another journalist similarly explains how he quarreled with his boss, who feared from reporting negatively on the police:

The first break came when they [the police] burnt down the tents. The tents were set on fire by undercover police officers. This could be seen in the video records. They have walkie-talkies and gas masks. Yet this was reported in all tv channels, including ours, in the following way: Protesters burnt down the tents. I fought to change this for about 2-3 hours. I turned on the video records, I said: "If you call these men protesters then either your journalism or your morality is skewed and I can not sympathize with either of these two." Then we received phone calls, warning messages from the audience, from freelance journalists, from people that I know in person. People sent emails asking, "how come you write this?" They were asking me. That is what frustrated me most about what I was doing. I think the boss was afraid. He feared the consequences of saying "the police burnt down the tents".

A reporter from *CNNTürk*, who was reporting live from the Gezi Park, similarly expressed her rage against mainstream media attempts to make police violence at the Gezi Park look ordinary. In the live footage from the Gezi Park, noting that journalists were severely beaten by the police, she sarcastically said: "If we don't count the beating of our colleagues, if we accept the beating as an ordinary incident, we can obviously consider everything that is going on at Taksim Square as normal." (Habergundemi 2013).

For these furious journalists who couldn't cope with enduring the practice of self-censorship in the face of the moral shock of Gezi events, carrying out proper journalism turned into a first reaction. Ali Ihsan Varol, who was doing an entertainment program of

word plays at *Bloomberg HT*, for instance, asked all the questions in the game about the use of tear gas at the park and media censorship. Once protests began to target media institutions, doing proper journalism turned out to be a reaction even for those at the managerial level. On the 4th of June, the fifth day after the beginning of mass protests, managers of the *NTV* news channel made a statement, apologizing for their mistakes in the reporting of events. The chief executive officer of the Doğuş Media Group, Cem Aydın organized a meeting with about 300 employees. In the meeting he claimed:

I realize that the latest developments have saddened the employees of NTV just like the rest of the media. The criticisms are rightful in general. I am not saying this for any particular reason but with my conscience. Our professional responsibility is presenting things as they are. Trying to restore balance in an imbalanced atmosphere has affected us all as much as it did the rest of the media. Our audience has felt betrayed and it is impossible to think of their criticisms as unjust. (Radikal 2013)

With this meeting, he also claimed to have taken the decision to exercise “actual journalism.” One of my interviewees explained how this decision was taken:

During the Gezi protests lots of protesters gathered in front of our building, and [they did so for] several times. They asked the channel managers to broadcast the protests that were taking place outside, at the door of NTV. The managers thought they were being clever and aired live images of the protesters outside NTV without broadcasting the sound of the protests. Then they said that there was a technical problem in broadcasting the sound. The protesters were not satisfied with the explanation and they wanted the sound to be broadcasted as well. So we

started broadcasting again, and this time we broadcasted the image with the sound. Two days later or the next day, Cem Aydın, [the channel manager] gathered us all. He said: “Hereafter we’re going to do journalism.” He said: “We were too consumed in work that we did not really see what was going on. Hereafter we will do what it takes to make news. There will no longer be ‘don’t write this, don’t broadcast that’.”

NTV was founded in 1996 by Cavit Çağlar, a businessman and a politician who supported the then-President Süleyman Demirel and was later convicted of bank fraud. NTV’s first editor in chief, Tayfun Ertan, notes that they had agreed to become part of NTV only when Çağlar gave his word that he would never interfere with news content. Ertan who was still working for the group at the time of the protests adds that after the meeting Cem Aydın told him that they had to get themselves organized like they were at the beginning (Corke, et al. 2013). Aydın’s attitude acknowledged the problems associated with the existing practice of journalism. In addition, in the meeting with the employees he highlighted that Gezi events were now giving them an opportunity to correct their practice of journalism. In an interview, Aydın also noted he was not surprised that the audience reacted like this, since the Gezi park protestors were their target audience (Hostettler 2016, 40).

My interviewee from NTV also detailed the responses of journalists to Aydın’s statement:

[At the meeting] There were those who cried. Some said: “We don’t have our eyes on money, we just want to do our profession.” Others said: “We are being catcalled, cursed at wherever we go. Hereafter we just want to be respected for doing reliable journalism”.

In this narrative, the journalist underlined that journalists were supportive of the statement as they thought of the practice of journalism as the primary means of gaining back respect and overcoming shame. My interviewee then presented his own perception of the transformation in news-making practices and its consequences for the channel:

Two days later Cem Aydın was dismissed from the channel. But for two days we carried out proper journalism. It was extraordinary. For two days we constantly talked about Gezi. Other channels were showing penguin documentaries, while we were doing journalism. It was funny. From morning to night. And we aired marginal, radical people's views. They were on air live. They said extreme things such as "this is a revolution." And we did not go off the air. If the same thing had happened a week ago, it would have caused public unrest. This has lasted for three days. In the midst of the third day they started dismissing people.

A similar account was presented by a journalist from *Hürriyet*:

Gezi protests were a milestone. For instance at Hürriyet, before the protests I used to receive complaints from the readers on why we do not make critical news, why we do not act critically, why we diverge from the classical editorial line of Hürriyet. With Gezi all this has changed. Lots of [news] organizations shook off. Imagine people come to your organizations' door, they protest and make you broadcast their protests! This was the point! A lot of people resigned, editorial lines have changed. At Hürriyet, Gezi ensured the reconnection of the newspaper with its traditional readership.

A consequence of doing "actual journalism" was confrontation with the ruling party. This was most clearly exemplified by the public quarrel between a reporter and the prime

minister. On the 3rd of June — the seventh day of protests and the fourth day after the crowds took to the streets — the prime minister organized a press meeting at the Atatürk Airport in Istanbul before he flew to Morocco. During the meeting, a *Reuters* reporter asked the prime minister whether he would consider softening his stance vis-a-vis the protesters. “What would be an example of softened stance? If you teach me, I will speak accordingly!” responded the prime minister. When the reporter said in response that the protesters were uneasy about some of the government’s practices, the prime minister noted in a threatening manner: “At the moment, we are holding off with difficulty 50 percent of Turkey [referring to the pro-government electorate voting for his party] in their homes [from confronting the Gezi protesters].” He then accused the reporter and her agency of misinforming the public about the situation. In an interview, the reporter explained she felt ashamed for the way journalism was practiced in Turkey and this has motivated her to ask a question as a journalist. For many journalists, this journalist’s act of doing “proper journalism” was an inspiring moment:

[At our news channel] We were watching the press meeting live. For the first time, a journalist asked a question that needed to be asked. Everyone at CNBC-E and NTV came to applaud enthusiastically. Some even cried. I think this summarizes everything that is going on in our work environment. We all work for this system, we all work for the system they want, but we also want that someone comes out to voice our views. I mean six people died [during the protests] and he [the prime minister] doesn’t even say “God rest their souls.” Instead, he says: “I did it and I will do more. I take pride in my police men.” He still says: “They consumed alcohol in the mosque, they entered the mosque with their shoes.” Just

one question being asked to him, just one journalist, and people applaud it so enthusiastically. You hear the same thing happening upstairs. Even this is enough to see what kind of pressure we endure.

In many cases doing journalism was not an option. Even in the case of NTV, where the channel manager decided to engage in “actual journalism”, two days later he was fired and the channel went back to its original policy of repression. Chairman of the board of Doğuş Media Group, Erman Yerdelen, who rejects suggestions that *NTV* had turned into a pro-government outlet, notes that Aydın had no authority to convene that meeting of employees, nor to change the direction of NTV’s editorial policy (Corke, et al. 2013).

In other cases, RTÜK, for instance, fined the critical news outlets *Ulusal Kanal*, *Halk TV*, *Cem TV* and *TvEM* (Özgenç 2013). In proponent newspapers, such as *Akşam* or *Sabah*, journalists who were known to openly support the Gezi protests were dismissed from their positions. A journalist from *Sabah*, who was dismissed at that time noted that his boss had explicitly told him that with the Gezi Protests they could no longer tolerate him. At *Akşam*, the head of the Media Group of Çukurova business conglomeration offered the editor in chief, who was known to support the protests, to become a consultant for TMSF, to make a TV program for the groups’ *SKYTürk 360* channel and to continue to write at *Akşam*. When the editor in chief declined the offer, he was replaced by a proponent journalist who had previously worked at *Yeni Şafak* and was elected as an MP from the AKP in the 2007 elections (Vatan 2013).

Under such conditions, where journalism was not an option, many journalists chose to resign from their posts. For instance, Mehmet Turgut, who had a TV program on the newschannel *NTV*, claimed to have ended his program for good. Another journalist from

NTV, who resigned from his post after the dismissal of the channel manager, notes that he delayed his decision to resign because the channel manager had held the meeting and claimed that they would engage in “actual journalism.” This journalist further adds that he would have considered staying at the same institution if he were able to conduct his professional practice properly. Yet once he realized that this was not the case he decided to leave the institution to continue journalism in other venues:

I had decided to resign. When he [the channel manager] apologized, I did not really believe, but I said: “Ok, let’s see where this will take us.” We did real journalism after that apology for about 2-3 days. We broadcasted everything. We broadcasted even the amateur videos that wouldn’t normally be broadcasted. We did our best. We reported on police violence and whatever was happening. But after the third or the fourth day the government resumed power, warnings were back, and Cem Aydın [the channel manager] was fired. This time we were under a much bigger pressure than before. They kept saying that there will be no news about police violence. So, I resigned.

Similarly, another journalist explains that the Gezi protests made him face his feeling of shame once again. He highlights this feeling as the motivating factor behind his decision to resign:

... I made this decision during the Gezi protests. Why? Because with Uludere [the bombing of Roboski village in 2011] I started asking myself: “How am I going to continue like this?” At Gezi, I was directly in it. I think being directly in it gives you the power. In other cases, after a while the incident gets colder, so to say. Even when you constantly hear, talk, and speak only of Uludere for a while, you

get used to the daily flow of things after a while. But at Gezi you see the police violence in the evening. Your friends are incarcerated, your friend's arm has been burnt, six people died, there are injured people around you, there is the extreme violence of the state right next to you. You see that, and then you also see that the news about Gezi is misleading, that it is censored. I said this is not something I will be able to endure for the rest of my life. I said life does not boil down to working here. I even thought that I could entirely give up this profession. I mean, if this is how I am going to exercise it, then it's okay not to do it. I said I cannot do this for money. This is not morality, this is a very human thing. And when they told us that there would be no news about police violence at Gezi, I made my decision! The attitude of the chief editor was disgusting! When he said we shouldn't report on police violence he implied that our reporting was skewed and that we reported too much of police violence. He used phrases like "we are doing injustice [to the police]." If he were to say: "In workplaces like this, this is how it works." But he didn't do it. At that moment two people were killed. But he still tried to attribute some justice to the kinds of journalism that he practiced.

Even a liberal journalist who worked at *Sabah* at the time and who had supported the AKP for a long time notes that during the Gezi protests he "flew off the handles" ("dellendim" in Turkish) and thought of resigning. He explicitly underlines that his reaction was a reevaluation of his agency in the historical process:

During Gezi, I flew off the handles and thought about leaving Sabah. My old leftist thing recurred. After all, this was a historical moment. One of the most important moments of Republican history. It was like the Revolution of 1908

[referring to the Young Turk Revolution of the Ottoman Empire when the Young Turks movement restored the Ottoman constitution of 1876 and brought back multi-party politics in a two stage electoral system under the Ottoman parliament], 6-7 September 1955 [referring to the pogrom where organized mob attacks were directed at Istanbul's non-muslim minorities], 15-16 June events [referring to one of the largest labor protests that has taken place in 1970 in Turkey]. It certainly was a historical moment. You are in such a moment and you face the question: "Where do you stand? On which side of history are you?" Don't forget, I was one of those who prepared the first page of Sabah. I was not the one to select the news but I was filling in the content, and we were writing anti-Gezi news. That was psychologically really hard. ... I should also note that I thought that Gezi was going to change the country. I thought that the AKP was going to soon collapse or would revise itself [according to the demands of Gezi]. Gezi was a turning point. So, I also thought that it was not a good thing to stand with the AKP. [I thought that] they [the military] may conduct a coup and they may detain us all. I could have been labeled as a proponent journalist then. I could be imprisoned as they did to journalists during May 27 [referring to the military intervention of 1971]. I really thought about these things.

Among those who resigned from their posts were several experienced journalists. Mirgün Cabas, who worked at NTV for 15 years, or Çiğdem Anad, who worked at NTV for 6 years, and Ali Kırca, who was the anchorman of Show TV, all resigned from their positions. These journalists were then replaced by proponent journalists. Resignation was not the only

form of activity spillout instigated by the moral shock of Gezi Protests. Multiple journalists also joined the protests at the park or outside the news outlets where they worked:

Many journalists inside joined the protesters outside NTV. It's not like we are not allowed to join. They [the managers] did not take on such an attitude. No one said anything to us for joining the protesters. But after the protests, Erman Yardelen wanted a list of those who supported Gezi by tweeting. Sort of a witch hunt. He said: "I don't want such things to happen again".

Journalists also organized a protest event of their own on July 12th to voice their demands and criticisms as a professional group. Slogans chanted and banners carried in the protest included: "Penguins are good at the poles" "Free press cannot be silenced" "In solidarity against censorship" "AKP take your hands off of the media". According to journalists who participated in this protest, protest participation was a means of "saving the honor of the profession and reclaiming the pride of journalism." (BBC Türkçe 2013)

Others put their effort into turning the protests that emerged at Gezi into journalists' organizations or into extending the base of existing journalists' organizations. A journalist who is also an employee of the TGS described their endeavor as an effort to overcome the feeling of fear:

During the month of June we were in the courthouse. The courthouse, the courtroom, the police station, press conferences. We would constantly get news about journalists that were wounded or detained. 123 was the number of journalists that got injured in June. This almost equals the number of journalists who work on the street. There were 39 detainments. ... We went to Gezi, journalists did not have the sponges that marked the name of the channel on their

microphones. Normally, they have huge sponges on their microphones. They were on duty as journalists but they did not want to reveal their professional identity. If you were to ask, they would all say that they were working for Halk TV [the major channel that did pro-Gezi broadcasting during the protests]. Everyone was afraid that something bad would happen to them. That fear triggered the feeling that we needed to do something.

Finally, the Gezi protests triggered the founding of new media outlets as a form of activity spillover. *Vagus TV*, which was a combination of professional and citizen journalism, is an example. The founder Serdar Akinan was fired from the daily *Akşam* due to a critical article that he had published online about the current political regime. He was also publicly attacked by the prime minister right after this article was published. Thus, he decided to start his own project: he continued his work as an investigative journalist and invested his savings in a news portal called *Vaguz.tv*, reporting actively on the protest as it evolved. *Vaguz.tv* was closed several months after the Gezi Protests, because it was unable to finance itself and find companies willing to provide advertisements⁸⁰ (Hostettler 2016).

Conclusion

Many have suggested that due to the financial connections of media owners to the government, weak professional trade unions, and aggressive use of repressive laws – which altogether led to the failure of the traditional media – social media’s popularity in news-

⁸⁰ In his interview with Hostettler (2016), Akinan noted that the standard response he got on advertising was: “providing you with an advertisement is out of the question”. As his efforts to secure financial help from private sources failed he was not able to keep the website running.

making increased over the period of Gezi protests (Tunç 2014). Departing from this observation, this chapter proposed a theoretical framework to explain how and why social action repressed in one sphere of activity manifests itself in another sphere of activity. Accordingly, reactions to repression spilled out to various forms of journalism. When journalists were asked about the reasons that made them take these actions, the motivations behind activity spillout looked alike. Journalists noted that they were reacting to the existing conditions in the media, that they could no longer endure the repressed practice of journalism for money, and that they felt ashamed for contributing to the way this media functioned. It was activity spillout that made the field of journalism a contentious sphere of activity at a time when pressures on the practice of journalism increased.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

In this work I studied the development of the contemporary field of journalism in Turkey. I explored the changing political, economic and cultural contexts of the practice of journalism that contributed to the evolution of journalism as a professional field as well as a medium of the political process. Specifically, I documented the entrenchment of the ruling party, AKP, within the secular Turkish state establishment between 2002-2013. Then I tracked the ensuing redistribution of power among actors in the field of journalism and the ways journalists with varying political identities interpreted such redistribution, forming their professional practices around these interpretations.

In analyzing the shifting structure of this field, I first identified the ways in which limits were imposed on the practice of journalism in Turkey and tried to see under what conditions journalists as professionals endured working. The study's focus on political and economic restructuring of professional relations between 1980 and 2002 resembled Turkish communication scholars' emphasis on neoliberal restructuring as a trigger for increased job insecurity in journalism (Tılıç 2001, Adaklı 2006). Yet it went beyond these studies in two respects. First, it extended the period under study to the 2000s; and second, it also explored the role played by the transformation of the nationalist and secular identity of the state regarding news-making practices. Hence, the dissertation presented the subjection of professional relationships instituted over the 1980s and the 1990s to a destabilization in

power hierarchies in political, economic and cultural terms after 2002 and how this has led to the rise of a new media.

In this argument I highlighted the concept of “destabilization of power hierarchies” as a specific form of social change that has taken place since 2002 and divided people into communities of disempowerment, fear and shame, on the one hand, and of empowerment and pride, on the other. Accordingly, structural reforms (which were prescribed by the IMF and the EU in the context of the 2001 economic crisis and Turkey’s candidacy to EU), political trials, property seizures, dismissals of journalists, and the accompanying discourse of punishment and purge of “the nation’s enemies” destabilized the power hierarchies in journalism by redistributing the opportunities for claims-making in the media among journalists with varying political identities. In a professional setting where organizational protections and solidarity had been weakened over the 1980s and the 1990s, empowering one group at the expense of the disempowerment of another emotionally redefined journalists’ meaning worlds and hence their news-making practices as well as organizational and contentious actions.

Journalists who had been working in the mainstream media and subscribed to a political identity that was defined as an enemy of the nation between 2002 and 2013 experienced the destabilization as status loss. The consequence in terms of news-making practices was unwilling submission to the narrative of political authority on political issues. These journalists tried to carry out actual journalism when opportunities arose, resigned from their jobs or established/joined independent news-platforms to overcome the shame they experienced for enduring such working conditions. Journalists who had been working in proponent outlets and subscribed to a political identity that was praised as the core of the

nation between 2002 and 2013 experienced the destabilization as status gain. These journalists willingly submitted to the narrative of political authority on political issues and went so far in the propaganda of the political authority as to produce fake news. Journalists who had been working in independent media and subscribed to a political identity that was defined as an enemy of the nation long before 2002, did not express a status shift. Having already developed a perception of journalism as a contentious practice against the pressures of the state, they continued to resist against incorporating their narratives to the single truth forced on journalists by the political authority. Overall, varying forms of professional practice presented by journalists with varying political identities turned the field into a repressed medium of the political process.

This argument contributes to the understanding of political process by including professional relationships, on the one hand, and political identity, status and emotions, on the other, in analysis. Institutions that are considered to be indispensable components of the political process – in this case, the media -- are products of individuals' daily professional activities. These activities are shaped through professional interactions. These relationships are clearly not exempt from the processes at work in the society at large, such as destabilization of power hierarchies. The kinds of knowledge about one's political "other", emotions, and experiences that emerge in these relationships as well as the product of one's professional conduct are affected by these processes, as well. In this regard, our everyday observations of the deterioration of the quality of the news or the decline in the presentation of critical opinions in the media or the increase in the number of protests by journalists in defense of freedom of expression can only be understood through an exploration of the ways in which professional relationships mediate larger economic, political and cultural processes

at work in the society. I claim that in the process of such mediation, political identity, status position and emotions play a crucial role in that they explain why varying social groups may take on different forms of action in the face of similar economic, political and cultural developments.

As noted in the introduction section of this study, in analyzing transitions to repressive regimes, political scientists successfully emphasize the role played by formal institutional change in skewing the field of power to the advantage of incumbent parties. Yet they fail to address how micro level interactions and practices bring about formal institutional change. This study highlights professional relations, on the one hand, and political identity, status position and emotions, on the other. It thus fills in this gap by presenting the political, economic and cultural embeddedness of professional practices that make up the institutions of the political process.

Findings of this study can be used to understand the developments that take place in other fields in effect of rising repression as well as the implications of these developments for contemporary Turkey and the societies of other countries that are transitioning to repressive regimes. In the following section, I offer several analytical applications for this framework.

The Field of Journalism and Other Fields in Turkey

This work provided an explanation for the developments in the field of journalism in Turkey between 2002 and 2013. Since 2013, the then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan has been elected president. Phone calls among Erdoğan, his family members, many other AKP members, media figures and businessmen were leaked as evidence of corruption by the party and the Erdoğan family. Turkey got involved in the Syrian civil war. The war against the

Kurds in the southeast of Turkey was renewed along with detainment of Kurdish MPs. Most recently a coup d'état that is alleged to have been inspired by a long time AKP ally, the Gülen movement, was attempted and failed. This led to the declaration of a state of emergency and a massive purge of civil servants. The framework presented in this work to explain the developments between 2002 and 2013 can be used to understand the developments that took place in the field of journalism as well as in other fields such as social media, the arts and academia as a result of these new political developments.

The Field of Journalism

After 2013, pressures over the media in Turkey entered a new phase. As an interviewee has put it succinctly, in the aftermath of the 2013 Gezi protests the government and its proponents in the media “stopped tolerating their critics.” We witnessed blacklisting and deportation of foreign journalists such as Bram Vermeulen and Frederike Geerdink, who were banned from entering the country in 2013 and 2015 respectively. Stricter control was imposed over the content of the news to a degree that in February 2017 RTÜK restricted broadcasting of “breaking news” in Turkish televisions “especially with regards to incidents threatening national security”⁸¹. Mainstream media outlets such as the *Hürriyet*, *Hürriyet*

⁸¹ Earlier examples of events that were followed by broadcast bans include: the leaks of the phone records between the Erdoğan family, AKP members, media figures, and businessmen (December 2013); the rape of an underage prisoner (May 2014), the criminal corruption investigation that involved several ministers of the AKP government (November 2014); the explosion at a coal mine in the city Manisa's town of Soma that killed 301 people (May 2014); seizure of Turkey's Mosul consul general and his staff by ISIS (June 2014); the stopping of the MIT (Turkish Intelligence Agency) trucks that were officially claimed to carry aid for Syria but were alleged to carry weapons (January 2015), an explosion in the town of Suruç that killed 33 people who were giving a press statement on their planned trip to reconstruct the Syrian-Kurdish town of Kobani that was until recently under ISIL occupation (July 2015), an explosion in Ankara that killed 103 people (October 2015); an explosion in Ankara that killed more than 30 people (March 2016); an attack by armed

Daily News and *Radikal* were attacked by mob chanting “You dog Doğan, do not test our patience”, “Recep Tayyip Erdoğan” “God is great” (Hürriyet Daily News 2015). Additional social groups were defined as “terrorists” and “coup plotters”. In particular, Gülenists are since 2014 described by the government and the judiciary as members of the “FETÖ/PDY” terror organization⁸². More than 250 companies including media outlets were seized over alleged Gülen movement links⁸³. A jump took place in the number of law suits filed against journalists on the grounds of defamation, terror and espionage, as well. Between August 2014 and March 2016 alone nearly 2000 cases were filed against people for insulting Erdoğan. Many among these were journalists (Toksabay 2016).

Along with such increase in the pressures over journalists and media organizations, beginning with 2013 Turkey’s status in the Freedom House’s press freedom index dropped from partly free to not free (see Figure 7).

gunmen in Istanbul that killed 45 people (June 2016); an explosion in Istanbul that killed 48 people (December 2016); the killing of the Russian ambassador to Ankara (December 2016); and the mass shooting in Istanbul on New Year’s Eve that killed 39 people (January 2017).

⁸² In 2014, along with the leaking of the phone calls, the Gülen movement separated itself from the AKP and turned into a critic of the government. FETÖ/PDY stands for “the terror organization that supports Fetullah (the preacher that heads the Gülenist movement)/parallel state organization”.

⁸³ Media outlets such as the daily *Zaman*, the daily *Bugün*, *Bugün TV*, *Samanyolu TV*, *S Haber*, *Kanaltürk* and *Cihan News Agency* were seized by TMSF and their management was handed over to government appointed managers.

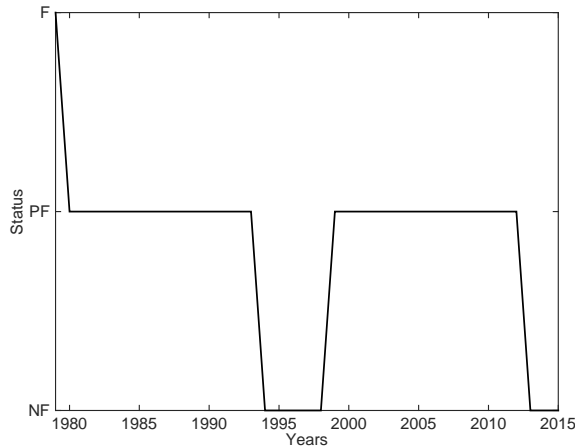


Figure 7. State of Freedom of the Press in Turkey (1980-2015)

Source: Freedom House

Note: F indicates free. PF indicates partly free. NF indicates not free.

The framework that I proposed in this study revealed how political trials, seizure of media outlets, and public smearing of journalists went hand in hand with a discourse of punishment and purge of the nation’s “enemies”, namely “the coup plotters” and “the terrorists”. As additional identity groups were described as terrorists and coup plotters, their media outlets were seized. Journalists working at these outlets were subjected to public smearing campaigns, judicial investigations, and jailings.

The study also presented a framework to understand how the destabilizing acts of the government affected status positions and emotions of journalists, and by that means the news, the contentious activities of journalists, and the structure of relationships among journalists. This framework also explains how rising pressures over the media after 2013 led to further submission -- both willing and unwilling -- to the government’s narrative on political issues, and a consequential decline in the difference between mainstream and proponent media outlets’ reporting. In this context, not only proponent newspapers but also mainstream newspapers adopted the practice of appearing with the exact same headlines. For

instance, on August 16, 2013 *Yeni Şafak*, *Sabah*, *Vatan*, *Star*, *Bugün*, *Güneş*, *Milat*, *Hürriyet* ran the headline “Moses will appear and call them to account”, citing Erdoğan’s speech where he criticized the toppling down of the government in Egypt. Similarly, on February 11, 2017 *Yeni Şafak*, *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *Türkiye*, *Star* ran the headline “Let’s Get Rid of the Shackles”, citing Erdoğan’s speech, where he described the parliamentary system as a shackle and asked for a “yes” vote in the upcoming referendum for a shift to a presidential system.

Another consequence of rising pressure was the continuing increase in contentious activities by independent news outlets. For instance after the attack and massacre on French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on January 7, 2015, the daily *Cumhuriyet* announced that it would publish a selection from the final issue of *Charlie Hebdo*. Subsequently, the police raided the print house of *Cumhuriyet* without a judge’s order and searched the delivery trucks. When two journalists of *Cumhuriyet* printed the controversial cover of *Charlie Hebdo* in their columns, both journalists were charged with “openly humiliating religious values adapted by a certain group in the society” (Artsfreedom 2015).

Finally, another effect of rising pressure was the polarization that took place in the journalist community. Journalists’ news-making practices that either supported or criticized the state, the government and the AKP turned into dividers in the journalist community. Multiple journalists who were critical of the AKP highlighted the feeling of estrangement they experienced from those who engaged in defamation in the name of the AKP. Others took positions like that of Fatih Altaylı, whose phone calls with state officials were leaked in December 2013. During an interview on why he complied with the political authority, Altaylı

expressed the resentment he felt towards the accusers in the mainstream media for not engaging in self-criticism.

One particular case from 2015 is a good illustration of both the continuing destabilizing acts of the government and the ways these acts continued to affect news-making, organizational and protest activities of journalists as well as the relationships among journalists after 2013. The newly appointed chief editor of the daily *Cumhuriyet*, Can Dündar, who was sacked of his position in *Milliyet* in 2013 after the seizure of *Milliyet* by a proponent businessmen, got hold of the video footage showing trucks from Turkey's intelligence service MIT on their way to the Syrian border. These trucks had been in the news in early 2014 when the gendarmerie stopped and searched them at the behest of a public prosecutor. The AKP government rapidly intervened, and the trucks were allowed to proceed. At the time, the rumour was that the trucks were involved in transporting weapons. Tayyip Erdoğan, still the prime minister of Turkey at the start of 2014, swore that they were transporting aid intended for Turkmen living in Syria, an ethnic group closely related to the Turks (Geerdink 2016, 2). In 2015, Dündar's *Cumhuriyet* published images of the trucks where artillery shells, mortar bombs and ammunition for automatic weapons were placed under the packages of plasters and boxes of bandages and medicines. The headline of the newspaper was: "Look, the weapons that Erdoğan said did not exist."

In response, a ban was imposed on publishing the images, and access to the websites showing the images was blocked. Erdoğan vowed: "That person, who made this special news, ... he is going to pay a high price for that. I am not going to let him get away with it." *Cumhuriyet's* journalists then reacted by publishing a front page showing the photographs and signatures of the editorial staff, along with the declaration that they all took

responsibility for the news and wished to be pursued legally along with their editor (Geerdink 2016). In the process, proponent newspapers appeared with the same headline: “There is no antidote for treason” depicting the journalists of *Cumhuriyet* as traitors. In the news, proponent outlets reported that the video showing the search of trucks had been leaked to *Cumhuriyet* by members of the Gülen movement, which was at the time accused of attempting to topple the government and described as a terrorist organization. As of 2017, eleven journalists from the daily *Cumhuriyet* are detained waiting for trial. The then editor Can Dündar, for whom there is a warrant on charges of espionage and publishing state secrets now lives in Germany in exile after being detained for three months in 2016. Demonstrating a form of activity spillover, Dündar launched a new online newsplatform, *ozguruz.org*, from Germany in 2017.

Other Fields

The developments in journalism between 2007 and 2013 became a dress rehearsal for the pressures that spread to other fields of activity. When we talk of the rise of a repressive regime in Turkey today, we talk not only of journalists’ repression but also of the repression of artists, social media users and academics among others. Much like in the field of journalism, in these other fields of activity we observe status shifts, feelings of empowerment, disempowerment and respect for profession, willing and unwilling submission to government’s position, an increase in protests and establishment of alternative organizations.

In the field of the arts, in particular, we witnessed a myriad of destabilizing legal actions initiated by state and government officials. These actions resulted in substantial fines as well as prison terms for critical writers, publishers, and cartoonists. For instance, the

author and editor of the book *Gezi Phenomenon* was charged with “insulting” the then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan. Similarly, an investigation was initiated against the book *Catch that Thief* and its author for “insult” and “violation of privacy” of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, his son Bilal Erdoğan and Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım. In other cases, criminal charges of “insulting the president”, “defamation”, and “compromising the confidentiality of the investigation” were brought against the *Cumhuriyet*’s cartoonist Musa Kart for his portrayal of the corruption investigation and against the cartoonists of the humor magazine *Penguin*, Bahadır Baruter and Özer Aydoğan, for their portrayal of the president, which according to the complainant implied the president to be gay⁸⁴ (Artfreedom 2015). Critical authors’ planned book-signing events and interviews were cancelled upon municipal orders. Film festivals and movies also got their share of the destabilizing acts of the government. For instance, in 2015, the showing of the documentary *Bakur* (North) that took the everyday lives of PKK guerrillas as its subject was canceled at the 34th Istanbul Film Festival. The festival organizers stated that the showing had been cancelled after a notice received from the Culture and Tourism Ministry “reminding them that all films created in Turkey to be shown at the festival must have obtained a registration document”. Police officers then came to check whether the film was being shown and warned festival staff not to put it on as it would be difficult to assure the safety of viewers if they did. (Index on Censorship 2016). We also observed censoring of the TV appearances of low-cut dresses or wine glasses.

In such an atmosphere, artists of various political identities adopted various forms of professional practice. Those who recognized these state acts as a source of pressure and

⁸⁴ In the cartoon, a greeter buttoned his jacket while welcoming the newly elected President Tayyip Erdoğan. The drawing showed the greeter’s thumb and index fingers forming a circle, which was interpreted to imply the president to be gay (Artfreedom 2015).

feared the consequences of pressure resorted to self-censorship⁸⁵ (Gence 2013). Those who praised the interventions of the government, and felt empowered by presenting themselves as part of the “nation” aligned their artistic practices with what the government expected of them. Those who sought to overcome the feeling of fear came up with alternative ways of practicing art as well as resisting censorship in the arts⁸⁶.

In the field of social media, Turkey dropped into the “Not Free” category in 2016 in Freedom House’s Internet Freedom Status Rankings amid multiple blockings of social media platforms such as *Twitter* and *Youtube*, content removals, and prosecutions of users, most often for offenses related to criticism of the authorities or religion. According to data provided by *engelliweb.com* (“Blocked Web”), which enlists the blocked websites in Turkey and was itself blocked in January 2017, the number of blocked websites rose from 1,310 in 2008 to 115,805 in 2016⁸⁷ (Yesil, Sözeri and Khazraee 2017). According to Twitter’s Transparency Report, Turkey was the country with by far the most removal requests worldwide successively in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Similarly, according to Facebook

⁸⁵ In 2014, the movie *Oluncaya Dek* (Until the Face of the Earth Becomes a Face of Love) was removed from the programme of the 51st International Antalya Film Festival by the organizers after a warning that showing the film may commit the crime of insulting President Erdoğan (Index on Censorship 2016).

⁸⁶ For instance, the *Siyah Bant* (Black Bar) platform was established in 2011 to document cases of censorship in the arts in Turkey and to defend artistic freedom of expression. In another instance, in 2016, the Ankara International Film Festival, which previously did not require registration documents for films, requested this document from all the producers of films that passed the pre-screening to be added to the programme. Two directors had their films removed from the programme on the grounds that registration documents were being used as a form of censorship (Index on Censorship 2016).

⁸⁷ The first attempt to systematically regulate internet use came in 2007 with the Law No. 5651, “Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by means of Such Publications”. The number of blocked websites grew with government attempts to launch a systematic policy. See (Yesil, Sözeri and Khazraee 2017) for more detail.

Transparency Report, Turkey was second in the world for removing content in 2014 (Artsfreedom 2015). The Ministry of Justice statistics also show that of the 2,002 individuals prosecuted in 2015 on charges of insulting Erdoğan and other state officials, 34 involved social media posts (Yesil, Sözeri and Khazraee 2017). In one such case, Fazıl Say, a world renowned pianist from Turkey, was sentenced to 10 months in prison in 2013 for denigrating religious values by sharing a poem by Ömer Hayyam, a medieval Persian philosopher poet, on *Twitter* – Say was acquitted of charges in 2016 after a long struggle (FIDH 2013, PenAmerica 2016).

In such an atmosphere, Turkey became one of the top five countries in VPN use. The most popular reasons for use are accessing restricted sites and reaching news (Sözeri 2016). While social media users showed resilience for use of the internet, they were divided in their patterns of social media usage. Much like in the field of journalism, one group, afraid of trials, stopped making political comments on the social media, engaging in self-censorship. Another group preferred instrumentalization of social media as a means of criticizing the government. A third group, in admiration of political authority, joined the ranks of the troll army established by the AKP to stigmatize the critiques of the government. Here I should note that after the 2013 Gezi protests the AKP government formed its own social media team. The team was composed of 6,000 people and the initial goal was promoting a positive image for the government. The team later came to be known as “AK Trolls” as their activities turned abusive, harassing and threatening critical journalists, and labeling them as traitors, terrorists or infidels (Yesil, Sözeri and Khazraee 2017).

Finally, the academic field most resembled the field of journalism in terms of the experiences and responses of the actors. The similarity manifested itself particularly in two

incidents. First, in March 2016 more than 1,000 Turkish academics and several western intellectuals signed the “Academics for Peace” declaration calling for peace between government forces and the PKK after the re-escalation of armed conflict between the two parties in the summer of 2015. Signatories immediately came under investigation. Some were prevented from promotion, while others were dismissed, deported and/or jailed. President Tayyip Erdoğan accused signatories of spreading Kurdish terrorist propaganda and undermining the country’s national security (Abbott 2016).

The second incident involved the developments in the academic field after the July 2016 coup attempt. In the week following the coup attempt, academics were invited and encouraged by the presidents of their universities to join the march of academic support for the regime. Academics who signed the “Academics for Peace” petition or were suspected of criticizing the government on other grounds were meanwhile put under investigation by their universities and accused of being a sympathizer of a terrorist organization. In some cases the terror organization in concern was claimed to be the PKK, while in others it was claimed to be the Gülen movement. By February 2017, more than 7500 academics had been accused of supporting one or the other organization. In waves of state of emergency decrees these academics lost their jobs, pensions and passports, and are banned from ever working for a public organization.

Here I should note that in addition to the measures affecting academics’ individual positions, legal changes were made in the field to reshape both the organizational structure and the content of academic research. For instance, the procedure by which university presidents were elected was replaced with a new procedure according to which they would be appointed by the president of the country. As an example of intervention in the content of

academic research, in 2015, the Ministry of Interior has informed academics that they need prior approval before conducting research on Syrian refugees living in Turkey (Kayaoğlu 2015).

The developments in the academic field turned out to be so dismal in their consequences that three academics committed suicide in the first two months of 2017. One of them, who was accused of membership to FETÖ, emphasized how he felt in the face of the accusations in the note left before his suicide: “I was calumniated. I leave the fate of those who calumniated me to God.” (Duvar 2017). Many academics, who were on the job market and unemployed before the coup describe unemployment as a better status than being purged by a state of emergency decree. Clearly these developments affected the professional responses of academics, and mainly in three ways: one group, critical of the government but also fearful of purge and unemployment chose to remain silent in order to protect their positions at the universities. Another group chose to show explicit support for the government highlighting “the times of turbulence as a time for opportunity” (Abbott 2016) and informing authorities against those who they labeled as supporters of “terror”. A third group presented a critical stance by organizing public lectures or protest events in defense of academic dignity or by engaging in activities of standing in solidarity with the dismissed. Many among those in the third group claim to be anxiously waiting to see whether their names will be on the next purge list.

Overall, the developments in these other fields show that just like in the field of journalism anyone in Turkey may get fired, jailed, stigmatized or fined for not being sufficiently pro-government. In this context, many people who look for jobs, try to maintain their jobs or try to strengthen their relations in the professional world look for means of

showing support for the party -- or at least for means of not being identified as an enemy of the party. Weber noted that it is by no means true that every case of submissiveness to persons in positions of power is primarily oriented to a belief in their legitimacy (Weber 1968). Wirth (1948) similarly stated that the submission that comes with coercion does not truly give us consensus but rather results in what the Nazis called *Gleichschaltung*, the process of coordinated control over all aspects of society “from the economy and trade associations to the media, culture and education.” Against this empirical and theoretical background, using the framework presented in this dissertation to analyze the developments in other fields will help us in explaining how the spread of submissive forms of behavior within established institutions of respective fields and the shift of proper professional conduct outside established institutions of the field, through an activity spillout, facilitate coordinated state control over various aspects of the society.

Turkey and Others

Earlier in the conclusion section, I noted that findings of this study also inform our understandings of contemporary Turkey and other societies that are transitioning to repressive regimes, particularly with regards to how authoritarianization and institutional decay take place.

Authoritarianization under Democratic Disguise

Recently we witnessed a similar crackdown in the media of other countries such as Hungary and Poland which are becoming more and more repressive. In Hungary, media watchdogs talk of the Hungarian media landscape coming increasingly under the influence of a new type of wealthy oligarchs closer to President Orban. Moreover, they claim that the

ruling party controls both media competition and media content through political appointments to the national media authority. Most recently, the most critical newspaper of the country was shut down because of steep circulation losses over the last decade. Employees feared that President Orbán was behind the decision. According to the observers, the restrictions on media freedom have had an enormous impact. With diversity of ownership and affiliation gone from radio, television and print media, the climate of control has not only introduced a significant trend of self-censorship in Hungarian journalism, but is also having a negative effect on foreign-owned media interests (Howard 2014). Similarly, in Poland, a new media law gave government more control over public TV and radio, and the right to appoint officials to top broadcast posts “to shield national interests”. It also terminated the terms of the current management of the national broadcasters. Thousands of people rallied across the country to protest the crackdown on press freedom.

Upon these developments, the observers asked: How is this all possible in the European Union? Scheppele’s (2013) response is “authoritarianization under democratic disguise.” Accordingly, governments, which “appear democratic but provide hopeless odds for anyone to challenge the existing distribution of power effectively” have learned the lessons of earlier authoritarianisms, and “achieve their ambitions without brute force.” In her account, the rise of a “democratic-edition Frankenstate”, “an abusive form of rule, created by combining the bits and pieces of perfectly reasonable democratic institutions in monstrous ways, much as Frankenstein’s monster was created from bits and pieces of other living things,” makes repression under democratic disguise possible. Victor Orbán, for example, she notes, “has mastered the art of legal suture so well that his Frankenstate can live and work in the European Union” (Scheppele 2013).

This study suggests that in addition to the character of institutions that make up the state, the nature of redistribution of power is another factor that makes repression under democratic disguise possible. By “the nature of redistribution of power” I refer to destabilization which leads to shifts in status positions and emotions of previously empowered and disempowered segments of society. In Turkey, the AKP’s initial term in the government was widely viewed as a step towards democratization: the election of a party that had its roots in a religious movement symbolized the inclusion of the previously excluded into the system and the changes were undertaken in the framework of EU accession negotiations. On this ground, many supported the destabilizing acts of the AKP. Time, however, proved that what was initially presented as an inclusion of the previously excluded was a destabilization in power hierarchies which enabled the growth of a repressive regime.

Institutional Decay

Political scientists define a “failed state” as a state that is incapable of controlling its territory, that can not provide sufficient education, health and other social services, that has lost legitimacy, and whose legislatures, security forces and judiciary do not function properly. Correspondingly, they suggest strengthening of institutions that sustain these functions of the state as a remedy and prioritize state agencies like the military, the police, the judiciary, public finance agencies, as well as health, education, and other executive agencies that deliver social services in their prescriptions (Call 2008).

This study looked into the professional setting of the media and invited us to think about how a media that fails to fulfill its role as a medium of the democratic process came about. Specifically, it suggested that the destabilization that entered our meaning worlds, changed our conditions of existence, and restructured our professional conduct, the

relationships we establish around this conduct and the product of our conduct, led to a decline in the functioning institutions of the media. In this argument, destabilization was addressed as redistribution of power among existing identity groups in the society.

Military, police, judiciary, finance, health and education are other such professional settings that are affected by destabilization. Institutions in each of these settings are restructured as professionals with varying identities experience a transformation in their conditions as well as meaning worlds. Hence, we can argue that the decay of institutions may lie not so much in the strength of individual institutions as suggested by scholars of state failure but in how institutions accomodate relations between varying identity groups. Correspondingly, depending on the case at hand, in a case of institutional decay the remedy may lie less in strengthening state institutions and more in protecting institutions from destabilization of the relationships between identity groups.

APPENDIX

Table 7. List of Interviewees

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Last position in the Profession	Type of Last Institution
J 1	M	85-90	Shareholder	Newspaper
J 2	M	65-70	Columnist	Newspaper
J 3	M	55-60	Ombudsman	Newspaper
J 4	M	40-45	Reporter	Newspaper
J 5	M	55-60	Management	Newspaper
J 6	M	60-65	Reporter	Newspaper
J 7	M	45-50	Editor	Newspaper
J 8	M	65-70	Columnist	Newspaper
J 9	M	30-35	News coordinator	Newspaper
J 10	M	60-65	Editor	Newspaper
J 11	M	55-60	Reporter	Newspaper
J 12	M	55-60	Columnist	Newspaper
J 13	F	40-45	Reporter	Newspaper
J 14	M	40-45	Editor	Newspaper
J 15	F	30-35	Reporter	Newspaper
J 16	F	30-35	Reporter	Newspaper
J 17	M	55-60	Reporter	Newspaper
J 18	M	55-60	Ombudsman	Newspaper
J 19	M	45-50	Reporter	Newspaper
J 20	F	30-35	Reporter	Newspaper
J 21	M	40-45	Chief Editor	Newspaper
J 22	M	25-30	Reporter	Newspaper
J 23	M	40-45	Editor	Newspaper
J 24	F	25-30	Reporter	Newspaper
J 25	M	55-60	Editor	Newspaper
J 26	F	45-50	Editor	Newspaper/TV
J 27	M	45-50	Columnist	Newspaper/TV
J 28	M	50-55	Columnist	Newspaper/TV
J 29	M	40-45	Management	Newspaper/TV
J 30	M	30-35	Reporter	Newspaper/TV
J 31	M	55-60	Reporter	Newspaper/TV
J 32	M	30-35	Reporter	TV
J 33	M	40-45	Editor	TV
J 34	M	50-55	Editor	TV
J 35	M	50-55	Editor	TV
J 36	M	30-35	Editor	TV
J 37	F	30-35	Reporter	TV

J 38	F	50-55	Editor	TV
J 39	F	40-45	Reporter	News Agency
J 40	F	30-35	Reporter	News Agency
J 41	M	25-30	Reporter	News Agency
J 42	M	55-60	Management	News Agency
J 43	M	60-65	Council Member	State Regulation Agency
J 44	M	55-60	Founder	Internet media
J 45	F	50-55	Founder	Internet media
J 46	M	65-70	Columnist	Internet media
J 47	M	55-60	Founder	Internet media
J 48	M	60-65	Photo-reporter	Independent
J 49	M	50-55	Photo-reporter	Independent
CS 1	F	35-40	Member	Civil Society
CS 2	M	70-75	Head	Civil Society
CS 3	M	40-45	Representative	Civil Society
CS 4	M	60-65	Representative	Civil Society
CS/J 5	M	60-65	Head	Civil Society
CS/J 6	M	75-80	Head	Civil Society
CS/J 7	M	75-80	Head	Civil Society
CS/J 8	M	35-40	Head	Civil Society
A/J 1	F	35-40	-	Academic
A/J 2	F	45-50	-	Academic
L 1	M	60-65	-	Lawyer
L 2	F	55-60	-	Judge
L 3	F	55-60	-	Judge

*Note:*J stands for journalist, CS stands for civil society actor, A stands for academic and L stands for either lawyer or judge.

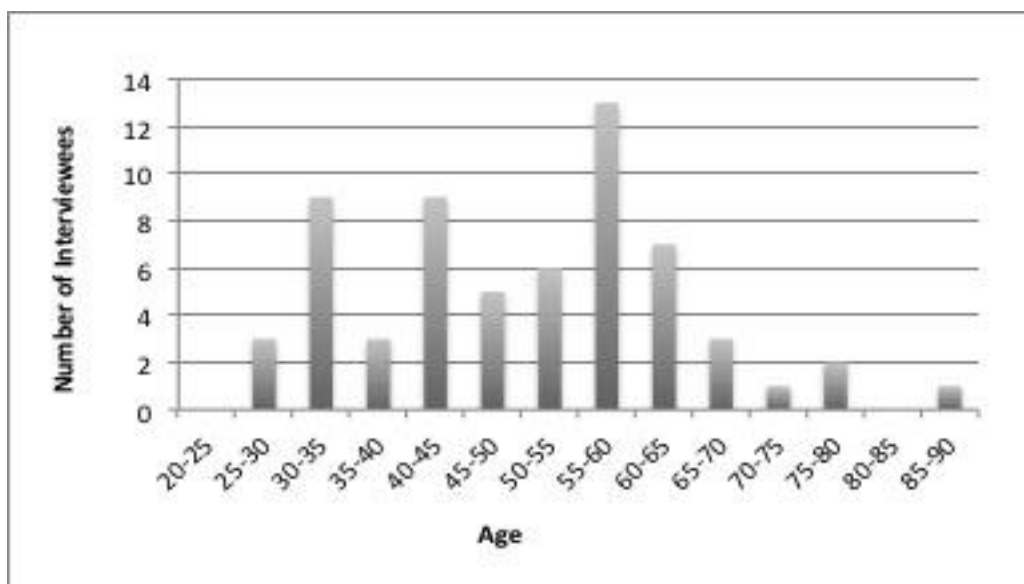


Figure 8. Age Distribution of the Interviewees

Table 8. List of News Organizations of the Interviewees

Name of Institution	# of interviewees who have worked at the institution	Name of Institution	# of interviewees who have worked at the institution
Cumhuriyet	17	Taraf	2
Sabah	12	AA	2
Milliyet	10	CNBC-e	2
Hürriyet	10	Kanal D	2
Evrensel	8	Star	2
Radikal	7	Today's Zaman	2
Birgün	6	Bugün	1
YeniYüzyıl*	5	Politika*	1
Bianet	5	Kanal 7	1
Reuters	4	Yeni Akit	1
TRT	4	Son Havadis*	1
Günaydın*	4	Ulus*	1
Habertürk	4	Yankı*	1
Zaman	4	Tercüman*	1
Daily News	4	Mehtap TV	1
YeniŞafak	3	STV	1
Güneş*	3	Yurt	1
CNNTürk	3	Aydınlık	1
T24	3	AFP	1
NTV	3	BBC	1
Sözcü	2	Posta	1
DIHA	2	Yeni Asır*	1
(Özgür) Gündem	2	Vatan	1
IMC Tv	2	Akşam	1

Notes: (1) Journalists that I have interviewed have generally worked at more than one news-organization over their career history. Therefore the total number of times that the institutions are represented in the sample exceeds the total number of journalists interviewed. (2) News-organizations marked with an * are no longer part of the journalistic field in Turkey.

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